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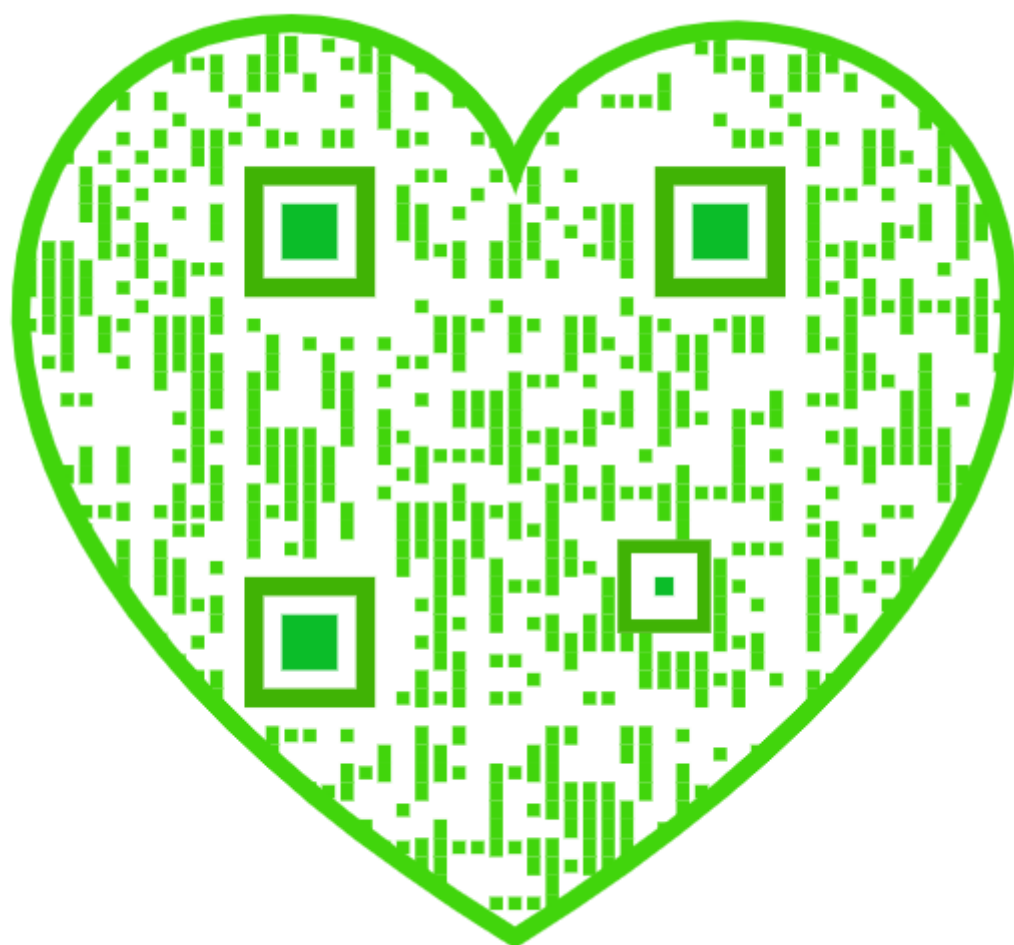
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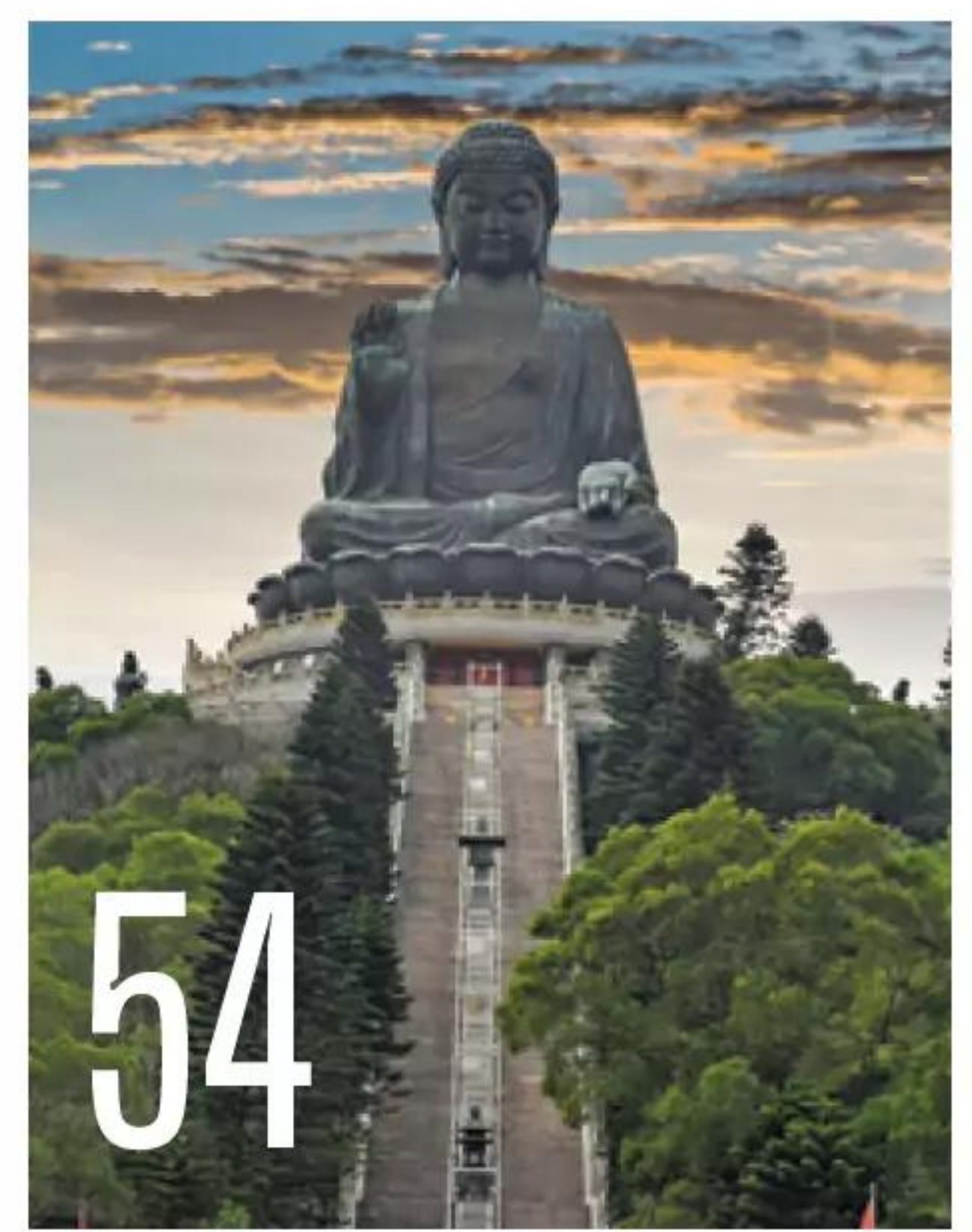
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Exceeding Expectations



◆ Editor's Letter

THE ANCIENT Greek philosopher Heraclitus once famously said that the only constant in life is change. While I'm quite certain he didn't mean this in the context of modern innovation as we know it, he was right - evolution is a natural part of life. The little things that make up our day-to-day lives aren't just moments - each one is an experience, a memory in the making, that leaves us slightly different than we were before. That's not to say that change is always easy - quite often, it's not. But it's not just the end result of a transformation that can make one so powerful - it's also the growth that we can experience on the way there. To use another slightly cliché (but no less true) saying, it's not just about the destination, but it's also about the journey that gets us there.

As you might have noticed, we've also had a transformation here at *Business Traveller Middle East*: after more than 20 years, we're embracing a contemporary new look and feel - all while still bringing you an intelligent mix of news, destination guides, and industry insights for the frequent traveller, and the Middle East's business travel sector. If we were a hotel, this renovation features a refreshed lobby, fully revamped rooms, and new amenities - while maintaining the aspects our guests know and love most.

We're not the only ones welcoming a new era. The region itself is on the brink of major change, with the future we have all talked about for so long now officially here on our doorsteps. From airports and airlines to hotels and the tourism industry, the Middle East's travel industry is leading the way in truly ground-breaking projects that are commanding the attention of the entire world - and we are so proud to recognise the visionaries, pioneers, and change-makers fostering a brighter tomorrow. Congratulations to all of the winners and outstanding names at the *Business Traveller Middle East Awards 2025* - it's an honour to celebrate you (p.32).

Embracing the future doesn't mean having to let go of the past - quite the opposite, in fact. As our event's Guest of Honour Simone Heng - and our Insight Report partners at Deloitte Middle East - so wisely explained, advances in technology like AI and automation aren't here to keep us apart, but bring us closer together. When used right, these tools underline the value of human connection: the things that make our experiences, our memories, and the journey of continuous discovery that is life so incredibly special. Whether you want to spend your time tracing back your ancestors (p.40), getting in touch with your creativity (p.48), being in nature (p.54), flying across the world for face-to-face interactions with your industry peers and more, we're here to help guide the way.

We hope you enjoy the issue!



Yi-Hwa Hanna

Yi-Hwa Hanna
Editor

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Dispatch

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HOT TICKET

Wherever you may Rove

The UAE's homegrown hero finds a new home in the Northern Emirates

WORDS YI-HWA HANNA

UAE-FOUNDED hospitality lifestyle brand Rove Hotels has opened the doors to its newest property, Rove Al Marjan Island. Located along the white sand shores of Ras Al Khaimah's Al Marjan Island, the new property brings the brand's signature casual hospitality to one of the UAE's fastest-growing leisure destinations - which, by 2027, will include the country's first integrated resort with gaming.

Rove Al Marjan Island will have 441 rooms with island or sea views, along with an outdoor cinema, food truck, live entertainment with a resident DJ, bright co-working spaces for busy business travellers, and a state-of-the-art gym. It'll also prioritise sustainability, with no single-use plastics used on-site, and the composting of 100% of its food waste.

IMAGE SUPPLIED



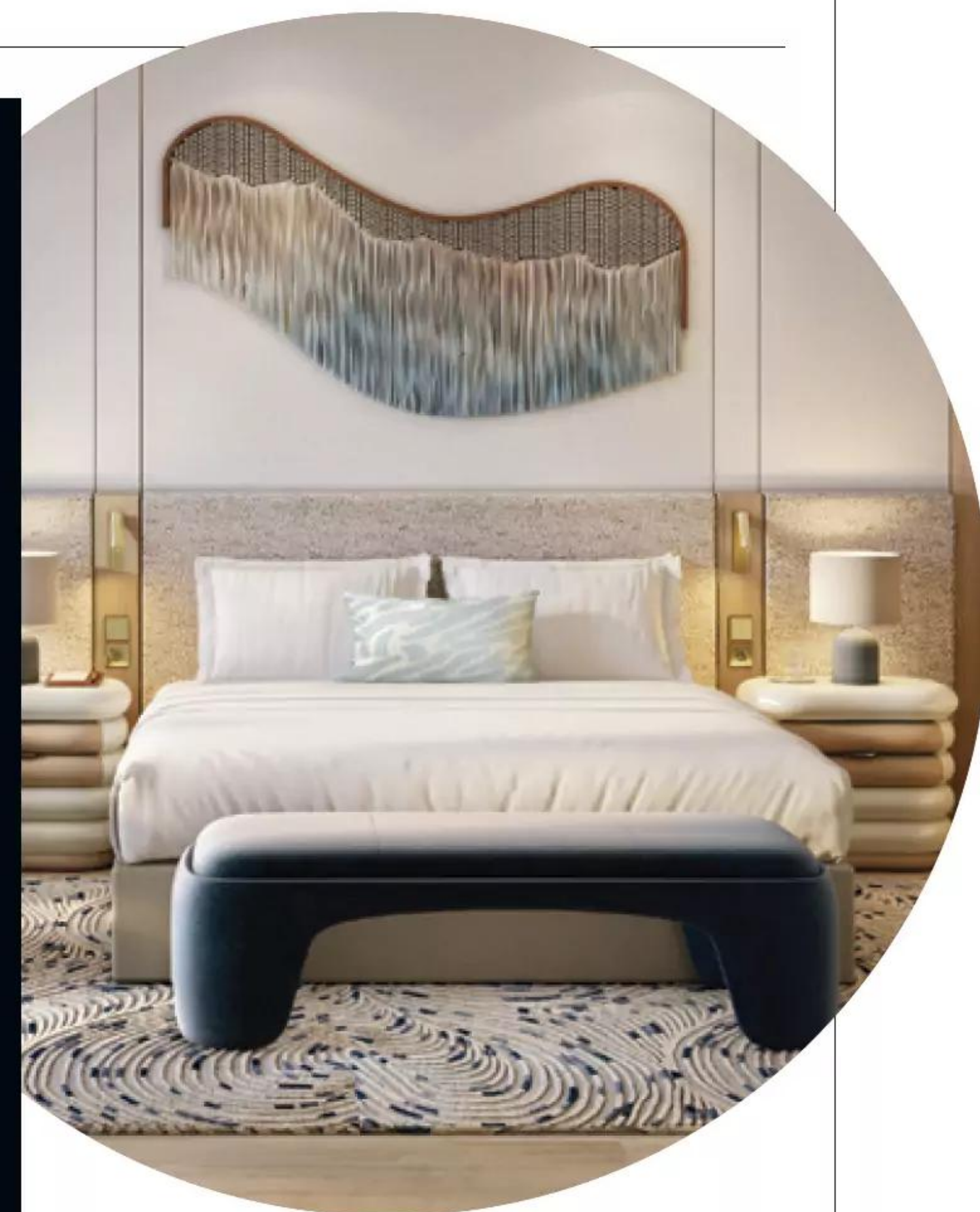
Kuwait's going coastal

HILTON HOTEL GROUP and real estate developer **Mabaneer** have signed a deal to open **Hilton Kuwait Resort** in 2026, marking a transformative renovation of the iconic property in **Mangaf**. The resort will be the largest coastal resort in Kuwait, with a serene seaside setting encompassing 1.3km of beach. It will be positioned as a premier getaway for residents as well as international business and leisure visitors. The extensive renovation will include the comprehensive upgrade of its guest rooms, chalets, and villas, as well as new amenities such as outdoor sports areas, a spa, beach club, and new



F&B options. Hilton Kuwait Resort will have approximately 330 guest rooms, including 80 chalets, 64 villas and 36 studio apartments, as well as a range of world-class dining options featuring local and global flavours.

Leisure facilities will include a spa, a state-of-the-art fitness centre, and indoor and outdoor pools. The resort will also have a range of meetings and events facilities, including a 2,100 sqm ballroom and seven meeting rooms.



HOT NEW SIGNING

Abu Dhabi National Hotels and Marriott International are set to open a new luxury resort and residential development under **The Luxury Collection** brand on **Ras Al Khaimah's Al Marjan Island**. The **Luxury Collection Resort at Al Marjan Island** is anticipated to have 466 rooms and suites, 29 villas, multiple dining venues, a relaxing spa, fitness centre, kids club, swimming pool, and padel court – plus more than 3,500 sqm of meetings and event space, including a 1,300 sqm ballroom.

IMAGES SUPPLIED



Cruising firmly into the Middle East

CELESTYAL CRUISES has signed a three-year agreement with The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), to promote the UAE capital as a key destination among Celestyal's guests and help further establish the cruise line's affiliations to the region. Celestyal will return to the region with two ships

in December this year, with three weekly calls to Abu Dhabi across the winter season until March 2026. Celestyal's shore excursion programme includes nine Abu Dhabi excursions, with half day tours taking in the best of Abu Dhabi, food and culture explorations, theme park visits, VIP beach days, and classic desert safaris and related attractions.

The cruise liner recently launched four new 14-night repositioning cruises as part of its winter sun season in the region, with sailings featuring two new countries for the brand - Jordan and Saudi Arabia - and five maiden calls: Aqaba in Jordan, Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Muscat in Oman, and Sharm El Shiekh and Ain Sukhna in Egypt.



SUSTAINABILITY STAR
The A350 aircraft has been celebrated for its comfort as well as its eco-efficiency



wireless charging, and cutting-edge inflight entertainment systems – has proven to be a hit with passengers, as has its economy class, which offers ergonomic seating, device holders, and Bluetooth connectivity with inflight entertainment.

As one of the most efficient wide-body jets on the market – with 25% lower CO2 emissions and a 50% smaller noise footprint compared to earlier-generation aircraft – the A350 also stands out for its sustainability-friendliness.

This summer, Etihad will begin operating the A350 to Atlanta, its newest and sixth gateway into North America and one of 16 new routes Etihad is launching this year.

The UAE national carrier recently signed a new landmark partnership with Ethiopian Airlines that will see new direct flights from Addis Ababa to Abu Dhabi launched in July, and direct flights from Abu Dhabi to Addis Ababa in September. The airline will also be relaunching its flights to Pakistan this September – a route last served in 2014.

ON THE MOVE

The A350 is flying higher

Etihad adds another of the highly-lauded fuel-efficient aircraft to its modern fleet

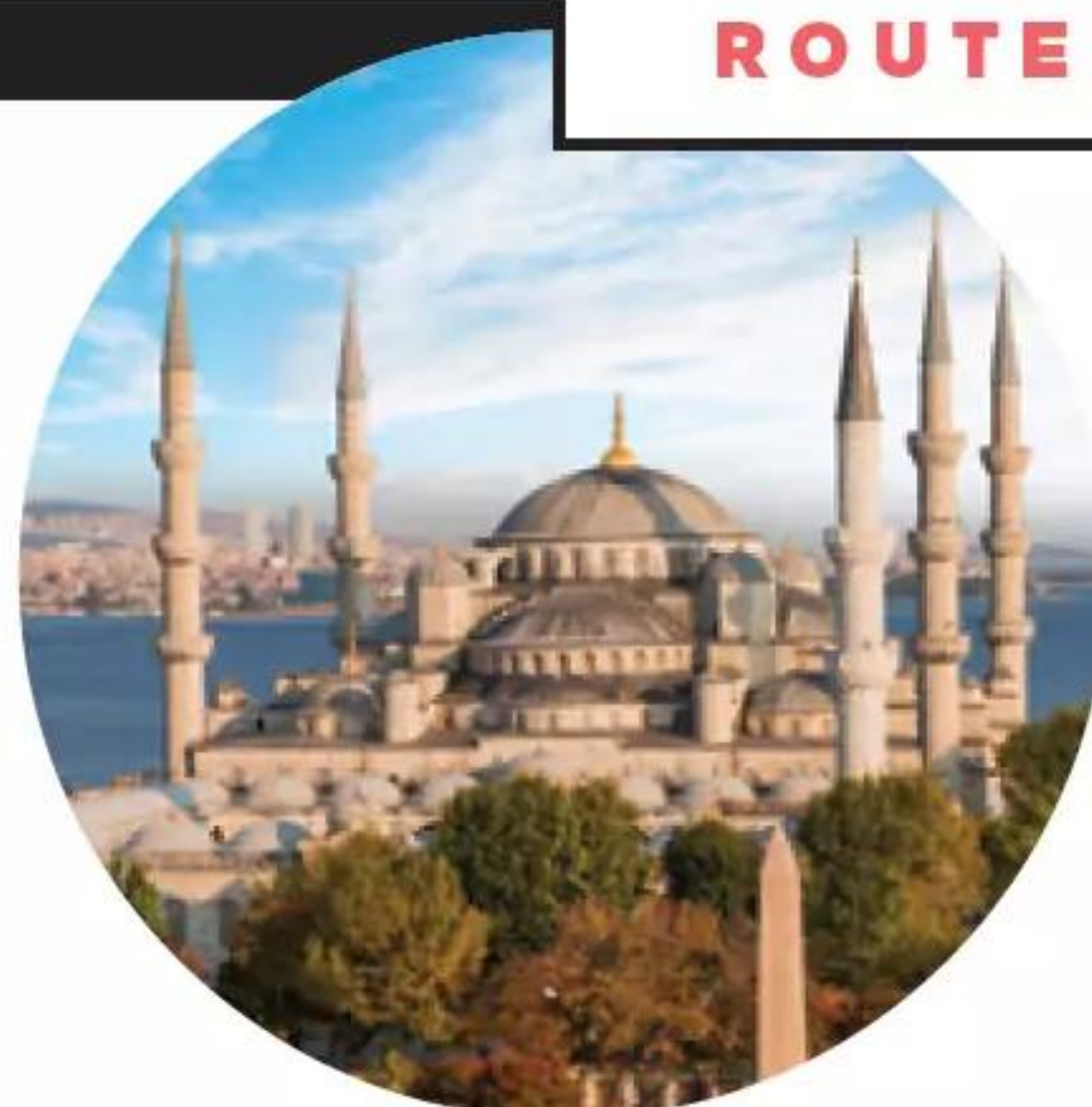
ETIHAD AIRWAYS has added a sixth A350 aircraft to its growing fleet. The UAE's national airline added the state-of-the-art long-range wide-body airliner to its list recently following a successful delivery flight from Toulouse, France. The addition will further strengthen Etihad's position as one of the airlines with the youngest and most fuel-efficient fleets in the sky.

The A350's award-winning business class – which features privacy-focused sliding doors,

ROUTE ROUND-UP



Wizz Air Abu Dhabi has launched flights to Varna, Bulgaria, and Bucharest, Romania. Flights to Varna are now operating three times a week, while flights to Bucharest Băneasa are operating four times a week.



Air Astana is offering an expanded route network for its summer 2025 schedule. It is increasing flights from Almaty to Türkiye, Georgia, and Vietnam, and has recently launched new routes to Guangzhou and Mumbai.



Turkish Airlines recently launched a route to Ohrid, a key tourism destination in North Macedonia. Reciprocal flights are now operating between Istanbul Airport and Ohrid St. Paul the Apostle Airport four times a week.



Qatar Airways will launch three additional flights to Manchester in the UK from 4 June 2025 to support increasing summer seasonal demand. The flights will be operated on the carrier's A350-1000s and Boeing 787-9s.



A NEW ERA OF SUSTAINABILITY

ROYAL M HOTEL Abu Dhabi by Gewan is making a mark in the world of sustainability through a series of major new eco-friendly initiatives. The property now has a fully solar-powered hot water system with 180 solar panels generating 252 kw of heat energy per hour - an innovation that cuts down on its electricity costs by approx. Dhs300,000 annually, while also reducing carbon emissions. The hotel has also introduced an advanced food waste system capable of reducing 25kg of food waste to just 5kg, as well as an in-house micro herb production initiative. It has also installed new energy-efficient, tech-fuelled entertainment in the form of The Water Laser Show - a Dhs1.5 million investment.

A Milestone Moment

A VERY SPECIAL CELEBRATION recently took place at Four Seasons Resorts Maldives: In March, the resorts planted their 9000th coral frame in the ocean. The initiative - which was carried out in partnership with Reefscapers - was the latest landmark in a series of pioneering marine conservation projects that span more than two decades. One of the most successful coral restoration projects of its kind in the world, the reef regeneration efforts at Four Seasons Resorts Maldives were born in the wake

of the 1997-1998 El Nino bleaching event. Coastal oceanographer Thomas Le Berre of Seamarc Pvt. - now Reefscapers - approached the then new-to-the-Maldives Four Seasons with his dreams of coral propagation. A visionary partnership was born, leading to one of the Indian Ocean's largest masses of artificial reefs to date covering 3.05 acres. Supported by Four Seasons, Thomas's research led to the development of a revolutionary coral frame technique now adopted by conservationists worldwide.

DID YOU KNOW?

In a recently-released report on the role of sustainability in shaping future-ready designs, PwC Middle East showcased **Saudi Arabia** as a prime example of economic diversification and business growth, alongside sustainable development

RACING TO THE FUTURE



LAGOS HAS BEEN confirmed as the first African city to host a race in the UIM E1 World Championship, the world's first all-electric raceboat series. The Nigerian metropolis will welcome the

championship from 4-5 October this year, joining an elite list of global host cities that includes Monaco, Miami, and Doha. The event will see the high-performance electric RaceBirds take to the waters of

Lagos Lagoon, marking a significant milestone in E1's mission to promote sustainable marine mobility. The race is backed by an African consortium featuring the Didier Drogba Foundation, Lilium Capital Group,

and the Fund for Export Development in Africa (FEDA), the investment arm of Afreximbank. Team Drogba, co-owned by football icon Didier Drogba, is one of nine teams competing in the championship.

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TURKISH AIRLINES

Air New Zealand pilot and crew in the new uniforms by Emilia Wickstead



Get the scoop

The latest updates in the travel industry from across the world

1 Air New Zealand unveils new uniforms designed by Kiwi designer Emilia Wickstead

(Above) The new uniforms will be worn by 6,000 staff from next year. The airline's current collection was designed by Dame Trelise Cooper and has been used for nearly 15 years. New Zealand-born Emilia Wickstead has designed the new range with bespoke hand-painted prints from tā moko artist Te Rangitu Netana. Key pieces include a dress featuring the tūi knot neckline and kōwhai print; a shirt with bold prints and a tūi knot neckline; a purple pinstripe trench; and a new waistcoat for male crew members and ground staff.



2 Discover Airlines to introduce Panasonic Avionics wifi

(Below) Discover Airlines is set to become the first Lufthansa Group carrier to install Panasonic Avionics multi-orbit antennas on its long-haul aircraft. The airline will begin fitting the technology from this autumn, enabling passengers to access wifi speeds of up to 200 Mbps, similar to the 5G network on the ground. The airline also recently announced plans to offer free inflight messaging for all customers from this summer.



3 Air France debuts new La Première suites on JFK route

(Left) The new suites have been launched on one of Air France's seven daily flights between Paris CDG and New York JFK. Flight AF004 departs Paris CDG daily (except Wednesday) landing back into the French capital the following day. The suites measure nearly 3.5 sqm, with floor-level storage, a chaise longue that converts into a two-metre-long, 75-cm-wide bed, an additional seat, and two 32-inch 4K screens.



5 Emirates to offer four-class retrofitted A380 on Manchester route

(Left) From 6 June (or earlier if the aircraft refurbishment programme allows) flight EK018 departing Manchester at 1405, and EK017 departing Dubai at 0725 will feature a four-class retrofitted superjumbo.

6 Westin Hotels teams up with Gwyneth Paltrow's goop

(below) The premium hotel brand - which focuses on wellness as one of its pillars - has partnered with the famous lifestyle brand to launch an exclusive video series, featuring Gwyneth and sleep physician and research scientist Dr Cheri D. Mah,



4 Oman Air to increase Heathrow-Muscat service

(Above) The carrier will resume double-daily flights to London by next summer - which it has not offered since the COVID-19 pandemic. A second daily frequency will be added on four days per week from 26 October, before moving to two flights per day "by summer 2026".





aimed at improving travellers' sleep. The series can be watched on goop's Sleep Training Hub as well as Marriott Bonvoy's YouTube channel.

7 Marriott opens first Tribute Portfolio in South Africa

(Above) The former NH The Lord Charles Hotel has been reflagged as The Lord Charles Hotel, Somerset West, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel. The 198-room hotel is situated at the foot of Helderberg mountain, around 45 minutes from Cape Town's city centre. Set on 22 acres of gardens, with features including the Scottish-

inspired St Andrews Pub, and La Vigna Restaurant, it also has two swimming pools, three tennis courts, a spa, hair salon and 11 meeting rooms.

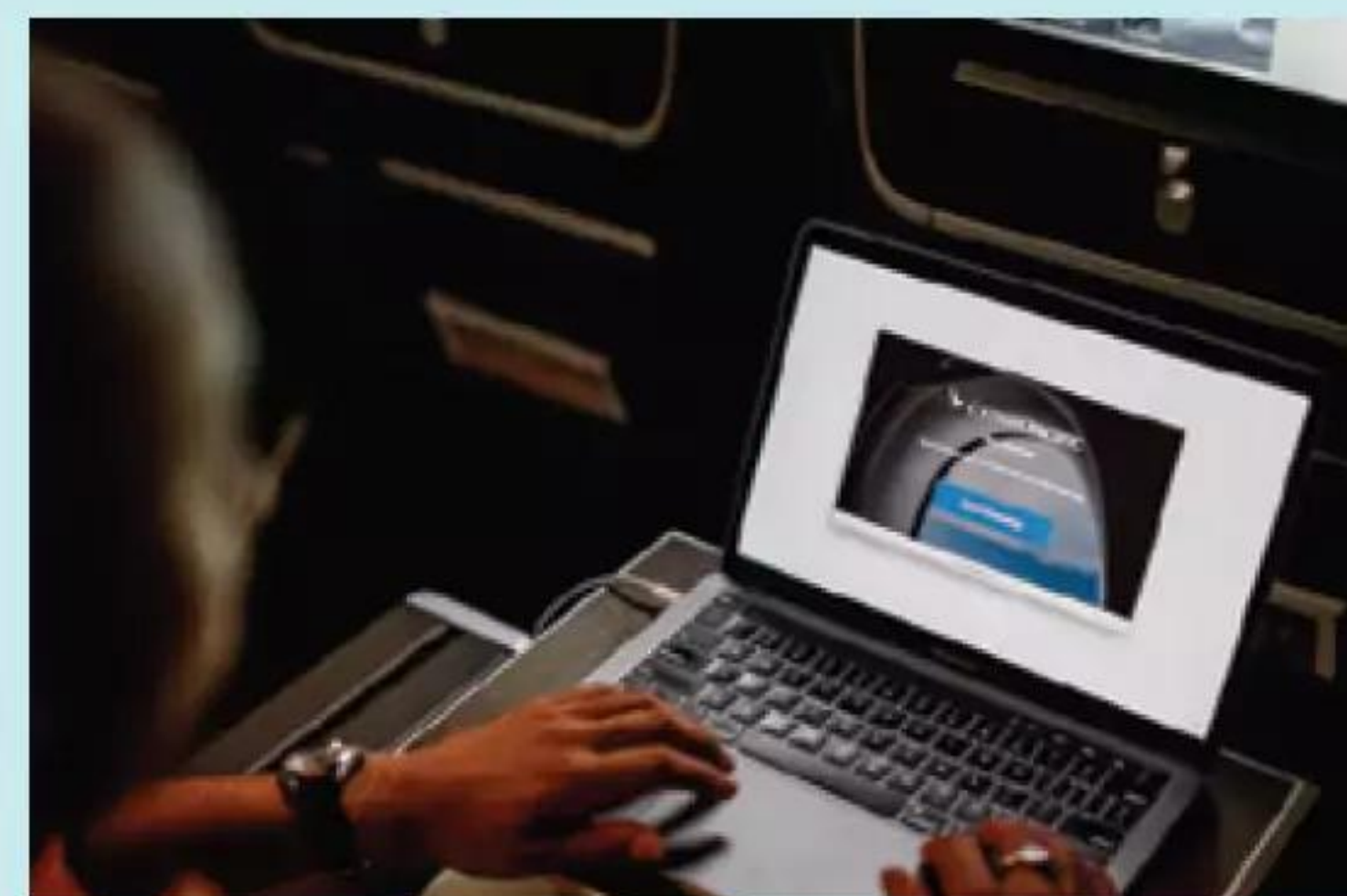
8 Fairmont Tokyo to open 1 July

(Below left) Accor is gearing up to open the first Japanese property under its luxury Fairmont brand. The 217-room Fairmont Tokyo is housed within one of two 230m-high towers as part of the Shibaura Project, and is now taking reservations for stays from 1 July. The hotel features a 35th floor lobby, spa, fitness centre and infinity pool, as well as a west facing terrace with views of Tokyo Tower, and an east facing terrace overlooking Tokyo Bay.



9 Cathay Pacific aims for fleet wide wifi and IFE connectivity by August

(Above right) Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific says that from August 2025 it will be one of very few airlines to offer both 100% seatback inflight entertainment and 100% high-speed wifi inflight connectivity across its fleet. Customers travelling on Cathay Pacific flights will be able to enjoy the airline's IFE system and high-speed wifi in every cabin on every route - part of



Cathay Pacific's quest "to become the world's best premium airline".

10 Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam embarks on "extensive refurbishment"

(Below) The 175-room hotel was the first European property to join Sofitel's Legend sub-brand back in 2011. French designer Pierre-Yves Rochon will lead the renovation works, which are expected to be completed by early 2027 and will cover guestrooms and public spaces.



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Insight

Expert opinions on the future of travel

Eastern promise

Yi-Hwa Hanna chats with Dane Cheng, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, about the destination's rising appeal for travellers from the Middle East



Hong Kong is increasingly positioning itself as a premium destination for GCC and Middle East travellers. Can you tell us more about this?

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has implemented a focused strategy to attract affluent GCC travellers, who are among the highest-spending visitors. In 2024, the average per capita spend reached approximately HK\$10,000, and arrivals grew by 69% year-on-year – further rising by 44% in early 2025 alone.

To cater to this premium segment, HKTB has launched the *Travel in LUXE* Hong Kong e-guide, featuring exclusive, high-end experiences. These include private yacht and helicopter tours, Michelin-starred dining, luxury hotel stays, and VIP access to unique activities such as horse racing events. This premium positioning is complemented by increased air capacity and improved accessibility, making Hong Kong a highly attractive destination for discerning Middle Eastern travellers.

What makes Hong Kong so unique and appealing, especially in competition with other coveted hotspots in East Asia?

Hong Kong's appeal lies in its distinct identity – it offers a seamless blend of East and West, combining tradition with cutting-edge modernity. This is reflected in everything from its skyline to its cultural festivals, culinary scene, and natural attractions.

For GCC audiences, Hong Kong stands out with its dedicated Arabic communication channels, Muslim-friendly infrastructure – including over 160 Halal-certified restaurants and accredited hotels – and immersive



“GCC travellers are seeking premium, culturally-aligned experiences and Hong Kong has responded”

experiences tailored to their cultural preferences. Strategic campaigns, partnerships with KOLs like Mazaj, and targeted seasonal promotions help ensure that Hong Kong's unique offerings are front of mind when travellers are choosing their next destination.

What are some of the travel patterns and behaviours you've noticed among GCC travellers to Hong Kong in recent years?

Recent trends point to a surge in both volume and spend from the GCC market. GCC travellers are seeking premium, culturally-aligned experiences, and Hong Kong has responded by enhancing Muslim-friendly offerings, such as Halal-certified dining and accommodations

accredited by CrescentRating.

There's also a noticeable preference for curated, luxury travel – private tours, VIP experiences, and family-friendly activities are in high demand. HKTB has recognised this shift and is tailoring offerings to meet these expectations through bespoke campaigns and high-end content on platforms familiar to the GCC audience.

Please tell us about the strategic investments and partnerships you've had in the Middle East – and your plans for future opportunities for trade, events, and MICE tourism between Hong Kong and the Gulf region.

HKTB is heavily invested in long-term engagement across the GCC. We've established strategic partnerships with leading regional travel platforms – Almosafer, Musafir, Wego, and Cleartrip – as well as airlines like Etihad Airways and Emirates. These collaborations focus on Arabic-language promotions and tailored campaigns.

We also maintain a strong presence at major travel events such as the Arabian Travel Market and the Luxury Travel Congress, showcasing Hong Kong's offerings in leisure, luxury, and MICE. To build trade ties, we host regular training and networking sessions in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, and Jeddah, and lead targeted sales missions across key cities including Doha. These efforts aim to deepen our relationships and promote Hong Kong not just as a leisure destination, but as a premium hub for business and events tourism as well. **BT**

Setting a new stage for luxury

Yi-Hwa Hanna chats with Ian Di Tullio PhD, Chief Commercial Officer of Minor Hotels, about wellness, sustainability, and the *White Lotus* effect



The Anantara brand has been even more talked-about than before since *The White Lotus* Season 3 aired recently. The hotel offers “The White Lotus Exploration” at the Thailand properties that the series was filmed at. What’s the best way to have a White Lotus-worthy experience in one of the brand’s MEA region properties?

Just like the fictitious *White Lotus* resorts, Anantara prides itself on providing authentic luxury with local soul, immersing our guests in each of the unique destinations we call home. Each Anantara in the Middle East draws on the cultural traditions, celebrated heritage, and natural beauty of the destination to connect guests with special places, people, and experiences. Anantara The Palm Dubai Resort, with its Thai-influenced design and award-winning Mekong restaurant, is the obvious choice for those seeking a taste of the *White Lotus* in the Middle East. Alternatively, the cinematic sand dune views that undulate around the private pool villas at Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara are so *White Lotus*-coded that some people say they’re a natural fit for Season 4. One of Anantara’s brand signatures is the award-winning Anantara Spa. In each destination, we present local healing practices alongside traditional Thai treatments, like those experienced by the guests of *White Lotus*, that allow for soothing, restorative treatments in unforgettable settings.

Anantara places a high value on wellness tourism. Why is well-being such an important aspect of hospitality today?

People are placing greater emphasis on holistic ‘all of life’ wellness, with a desire to live longer, healthier lives. Guests are increasingly using their travel time as an opportunity not only to rest and reset, but are actively seeking restorative wellness offerings that extend beyond a traditional spa menu – and allow them to maintain fitness goals or even reach new ones. Technological advancements mean

treatments are becoming even more tailored. Minor Hotels is building off Anantara Spa’s reputation to expand our wellness offering, with the purpose-built Layan Life by Anantara facility in Phuket, Thailand, and the newly-launched Anantara Wellness in Bangkok. We will continue to build out our wellness offering, with treatments that bring together local wellness traditions and modern technology to help slow down the clock.



“It’s our responsibility to maintain our destinations for future generations”

Sustainability is as important to Minor Hotels as well-being is. What’s your philosophy on “green hospitality” today?

Sustainable tourism drives our choices, and it’s our responsibility to maintain our destinations for future generations. We must be responsible as our long-term success relies on the well-being of our local communities and natural environment. Besides our pledge to be Net Zero by 2050 and reducing our environmental footprint, we are proud to engage in social and ecological initiatives that enrich our local communities. Our teams contribute to projects that are significant to the countries where we operate, including elephant, rhino, and turtle conservation; replanting coral fragments and mangroves; and protecting conservation areas.

We aim to set a benchmark for responsible hospitality in the Middle East by integrating sustainable practices into our operations. For example, the three properties that comprise Anantara Sir Bani Yas Island stand as a model of circular sustainability; powered by a 45 MW wind turbine and 14.8 MW solar field that feed the grid and support full energy independence, with on-site water condensers, thriving plantations, and a pioneering conservation programme that continues Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan’s vision – preserving endangered species, greening the desert, and protecting the island’s natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.

Anantara Mina Ras Al Khaimah Resort showcases our commitment to sustainable building and environmental protection. Sustainability was top-of-mind throughout the resort’s construction, from the material selection and how we conducted the build to the furniture and fittings, which use eco-friendly materials such as sustainable woods and recycled fabrics and plastics. We took great care not to disturb the surrounding mangrove forest, which adds to the resort’s appeal and is home to sea turtles, migratory flocks of birds, and the occasional rare dugong.

Minor Hotels is expanding rapidly in the region. What are you most excited about?

We operate 24 properties in three GCC countries under five brands, and we plan to have more than 60 properties in the Middle East and Africa by the end of 2027. Some of the most exciting developments include our entrance into new countries such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, as well as expanding our brand portfolios in destinations such as Oman – where we are looking forward to launching Tivoli Muscat Hills Resort and Anantara Bandar Al Khairan Retreat in 2026.

What are some highlights of the past year?

In 2024, we opened two Anantara-branded properties in the UAE: Anantara Mina Ras Al Khaimah Resort, and Anantara Santorini Abu Dhabi Retreat. Last month, we launched our new Minor Hotels Masterbrand strategy, unifying our portfolio of brands under a guest-facing Minor Hotels brand, making discovery and booking more convenient, and enhancing rewards and recognition for guests. **BT**

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OPINION

THE UNIQUE BURNOUT OF HOSPITALITY

High-pressure hospitality roles can lead to burnout, with decision fatigue and emotional exhaustion - and the brain needs time to recover



While some may consider the long hours, unpredictable schedules, and constant customer-facing interactions as part-and-parcel of the hospitality industry, there is a chronic stress associated with these high-pressure and high-performance jobs. Burnout in the hospitality industry may seem to have been on the rise in recent years, but it is more likely this has been a silent plague going back many years. When the effects of a poor work-life balance bleed into your well-being, this is no longer “part of the job”, and has become a health issue.

A seemingly innocuous contributor to burnout in hospitality workers is a concept known as ‘decision fatigue’. The brain has a finite capacity for high-quality decision-making over the course of a day. In hospitality roles, particularly management or customer service-focused positions, staff are required to make hundreds of small but consequential decisions. Over time, the brain’s prefrontal cortex becomes fatigued. When this happens, people become less effective, more reactive, and significantly more vulnerable to burnout.

Furthermore, hospitality workers are not only cognitively invested in their work, but emotionally invested as well. The term ‘emotional labour’ has gained recognition lately within the sphere of relationships – however, it is equally applicable to workers who are expected to regulate their own emotional responses in order to meet the expectations of guests. This constant self-regulation is cognitively demanding and activates similar brain regions to those involved in impulse control and stress regulation. This long-term state of ‘high alert’ is

similar to a chronic stress response, negatively impacting memory, attention, sleep, and even the immune system. Without adequate recovery, the symptoms can deteriorate and become more severe such as apathy, irritability, poor concentration, disturbed sleep, and detachment from work and important relationships.

While some may suggest simply quitting or changing jobs, this can be an unrealistic answer for many who are already struggling in the world’s turbulent economy. Reallocation of work tasks or responsibilities can also be impossible as many who work in hospitality have direct managers to answer to, and few staff below them in the hierarchy. So if the ‘obvious’ answers offer no solution, then what is a burnt-out person to do? Medically-backed interventions

ALPINE HEALING
Clinic Les Alpes is an exclusive luxury treatment centre in the Swiss Alps that offers custom treatments such as hospitality burnout, and more

such as sleep restoration programmes, guided mindfulness, and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) have shown promising outcomes in helping individuals recover from burnout and build resilience.

Sleep, in particular, is critical. During deep sleep stages, the brain clears out neurotoxins, consolidates memory, and restores emotional balance. Sleep-focused therapies that combine sleep hygiene education, behavioural interventions, and, where appropriate, clinical support, can dramatically improve functioning. Similarly, mindfulness-based interventions and guided meditation are not simply trendy wellness buzzwords: they’ve been shown to decrease amygdala activation (the brain’s fear and stress centre) and increase activity in areas responsible for emotional regulation and attention.

Finally, CBT offers structured tools to identify and challenge unhelpful thinking patterns and destructive beliefs that often fuel burnout. By reframing thoughts, identifying core belief systems, and building coping strategies, CBT empowers individuals to manage stress more effectively and regain a sense of agency. For some individuals, CBT can be accessible and helpful in an outpatient setting. However, for those experiencing long-term symptomatology, inpatient settings can not only offer more intensive treatment, but also a break away from triggering environments and relationships.

Burnout in the hospitality industry isn’t a sign of personal failure; it’s a neurological response to sustained emotional and cognitive overload. Understanding the science behind it is the first step. The second is allowing the brain what it’s truly asking for: time, structure, and support to recover. **BT**

‘Sleep-focused therapies can dramatically improve functioning’



OPINION

HOW HOTELS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

When did rooftop hotel accommodation become synonymous with luxury living?



Iwonder how many readers have been offered a room upgrade as an atonement for a mistake made by the hotelier. For particularly egregious errors, perhaps you might even have been offered the holy grail of hotel accommodation – the penthouse.

Steven Rutenbaum is credited with creating the word 'penthouse' when he used it in his biography of Emery Roth, the famed American-Hungarian architect who created much of New York's skyline after the First World War.

These fabled spaces in the sky have become the ultimate symbol of luxury, the most glamorous of accommodations occupying the top floors of hotels and apartment blocks where the rich and famous can enjoy life on top. But it wasn't always so.

START AT THE BOTTOM

Up until the early 20th century, roof spaces were almost exclusively considered staff quarters – poky, windowless rooms in the upper eaves. This was very much reflected in the traditions of English country manors, with staff having the longest climb to bed while well-to-do guests were obliged to make no greater effort than climbing the grand staircase to their first-floor accommodation.

British hotel design at the turn of the 20th century still mirrored the established practice. For example, despite the fact innovation heralded the Savoy's 1889 opening in London with electric lights and private bathrooms, the top floor was still populated with small rooms to accommodate maids and valets, while the most prestigious suites were found on the lower floors.

At what point did this change? When did VIPs dislodge staff back below the stairs?

Improvements in construction and engineering led by those in the US, and particularly architects in New York, were the catalyst, with the super-fast electric motor-powered elevator being the key. This new technology unlocked a concept of exclusivity and luxury living in the clouds. The privileged few could at last view the great panorama of a city, living in light and airiness, while the rest of humanity dwelled below.

'These fabled spaces in the sky have become the ultimate symbol of luxury'

To achieve Roth's classic form, a penthouse was not part of the main rising walls of a building, but rather set apart as a separate living space on the top – a distinct house atop of other living accommodation. They first started to appear in new skyscraper apartment blocks on the West Side, like the El Dorado building on Central Park.

The first New York hotel to adopt Roth's ideas, in part, was the Plaza in 1923, which created exclusive accommodation spread over the highest three floors. However, this space was contained within the main building – rather than sitting apart. It was at The Hotel St Moritz in 1930 (now the The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park) where Roth truly realised his vision of air, light, panoramic views and exclusivity in three new stunning designs that included outside terraces.

TRANSATLANTIC LESSONS

Across the divide, it took time for these new design ideas to permeate. In London, it was The Dorchester where the first opportunity for architects to embrace Roth's concept came alive in 1931. The design was thought by some traditionalists as 'too American' and there was some discussion that Park Lane was becoming too much like Fifth Avenue.

Despite the negative reaction, the new concept of penthouse living was embraced as a first for the city, with three suites correctly set back from the sweeping walls of the main hotel: The Penthouse and Pavilion, The Terrace and, the largest, The Harlequin.

LUXURY LIVING

Today, penthouses can be found all over the world. Among the largest is the 930 sqm five-bed, six-bath offering at the Mark Hotel in New York, with a huge rooftop terrace overlooking Central Park and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as a conservatory, library and stately dining room. As for the most expensive, both The Empathy Suite at Palms Casino Resort Las Vegas and the Royal Mansion at the Atlantis The Royal Resort in Dubai cost a cool US\$100,000 a night.

One of the best globally, in my opinion, is The Bellavista Penthouse Suite on the sixth floor of the Hotel Eden in Rome. It offers incredible panoramic views of the Eternal City, with private lift access, spacious living quarters and an opulent marble bathroom with a large circular bath.

But all this space doesn't appeal to everybody. The reality of the hotel penthouse is that despite the lavish cost to build, most remain unoccupied. So, it's always worth asking for an upgrade! **BT**

THE RIGHT LAYNE

Yi-Hwa Hanna chats to Layne Redman, TV presenter, writer, actor, emcee, and entrepreneur



You moved around a lot before settling in Dubai. What do you love about living in the UAE?

The travelling side of my life has given me so much insight into people and cultures, which has helped in my personal and professional life. A big part of what I love about living in the UAE is the events industry – the amount that takes place, and the proximity you get to the artists, performers, and writers. Being a part of the growth of a nation and seeing different cultures living together is special, and not many places around the world have such a blend, with all of them mixing together.

You're currently the host of a TV show on Dubai One. Can you tell us a bit about it?

I have been with the network for many years now, and hosted some fantastic shows. The current one is called DXB Today. It's now in its eighth season, where myself and a band of other talented hosts talk to great guests and musical acts as we explore everything that is happening around Dubai and the surrounding Emirates. It's a daily, live, in-studio show that airs in the evening – and if you miss us live, you can watch back online.

You've written a series of travel-themed children's books. What inspired this?

My children were born in the UAE. We are a multicultural family. They're currently in the UK and travel a lot, and I was born in multicultural London with a Caribbean background, and travel a lot. We wanted to show that this is the world we live in now, and how travel can teach us to embrace each other more – [while] also planting a seed in children's minds about [the importance of] natural and organic produce. There was a lack of books like this, so I decided to create the travel series *Luam's Balm*.

You've also founded an F&B business!

Can you tell us about that? The common theme in what I do is travel, family, food, and love! Papa Burty's Patties is a labour of love,



based on my great uncle Papa Burty's travel adventures. It educates people on different Caribbean cuisine, especially Jamaican patties, while transporting you to the islands. We do pop-up events and distribute to businesses and private clients, and we'll soon have a place of our own.

What have you learned from entrepreneurship? Personal integrity.

Look into yourself first – ask "Why am I doing this?" Your relationships are essential – things work more smoothly with collaborations. It's important to be with like-minded entrepreneurs and create towards a common goal. Retain purpose and passion, and keep going again and again; always try something new and keep moving forward.

I lean into adventure – I'm in front of the camera as a presenter, but I'm also behind it as a producer. I'm also working on a very exciting new project related to travel – watch this space!

What are your top tips for commanding a room?

I will be running my own course on public speaking this year, but my first tip would be to mirror who you're interacting with – so be in the shoes of an audience member. They want information, so this automatically puts you on a common mission. Maintain eye contact, and if you

can, use a personal story regarding the information you're giving – knowledge, life experience, and research are keys that will give you confidence on what you're talking about. Your tone and delivery will adjust. Don't overthink, and have zero expectations at the time. There is a fine line between confidence and arrogance. Be humble to learn more, but you know what you know – so go own it!

What's your business travel like? Travelling for hosting is always a joy. As a producer, it's like a recce too – I get ideas, and content for future shoots. At the end of last year, I flew to Qatar to host the main stage for the Qatar F1. Throughout the years I've travelled to some wonderful places for work, like Germany for the last Invictus games in Dusseldorf, Barcelona, the Seychelles, Maldives, and Hong Kong. Hosting in London is always great because I'm home.

What's the first thing you do when arriving at a new destination? Call my children to show them where I am. I like to get a local phone number to find out the best places for local food and what I can do in the time I'm there.

What three things do you always pack? A skipping rope, pictures of my children, and a book. I've also always got snacks!

What is your earliest holiday memory? I started flying at a young age with my aunt, from Barbados to Boston and New York. I remember NYC being exactly like the films and TV shows – steam coming from the ground; quite dirty, with the humidity and crime. It prepared me to be confident enough to walk in any city around the world. When I visit NYC now it's so different, and I enjoy it even more.



What is your go-to choice of IFE?

I always have my own headphones so I can enjoy all of the entertainment with good sound. I start with music for taxiing and take-off, then after 30 minutes, if I'm on a long haul I'll watch the latest film and then a documentary. Then another film, then a TV show, then back to music for landing.

How do you spend your air miles? I don't! I think after all these years of travel I've bought one flight with them, and maybe an upgrade and a hand luggage scale. I always forget to use them, then lose them. **BT**



The Elevator Pitch

Business Traveller Middle East gives **Harun Dursun**, Managing Director of Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab, five minutes to pitch his property to prospective guests



Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab is not just the newest addition to Dubai's luxury landscape – it's the culmination of Jumeirah's 25-year

legacy of excellence. As the final piece in our iconic nautical trilogy alongside Jumeirah Burj Al Arab and Jumeirah Beach Hotel, the resort stands on its own private peninsula, offering a rare blend of contemporary design, world-class wellness, and a deeply personal guest experience.

From the outset, our goal was to create a destination that redefines modern luxury. We partnered with architect Shaun Killa – renowned for the Museum of the Future – to craft a striking exterior inspired by the elegance of Italian Riva yachts. Inside, guests will find handcrafted silk carpets, warm golden tones, crystal chandeliers, and expansive floor-to-ceiling windows that invite the outdoors in. Sustainability is also woven into our DNA, from energy-

efficient lighting to self-shading terraces and water recycling systems.

But beyond the aesthetics, what truly distinguishes Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab is our commitment to a new era of hospitality – where expansive space, intuitive service, and immersive experiences converge to offer something exceptional. This philosophy is brought to life by our carefully assembled team, including over 70 dedicated butlers and guest relations experts trained to deliver anticipatory, heartfelt service.

Our 300 spacious rooms and 86 suites, all with private terraces, are meticulously designed for comfort and style. For longer stays or elevated privacy, our serviced residences provide a residential-style experience, complete with tailored amenities and access to a private marina.

ABOVE FROM LEFT: Harun Dursun; Ocean Terrace Suite Bedroom; Kinugawa Adult Pool

BOTTOM: Reception entrance



'Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab is not just the newest addition to Dubai's luxury landscape'

With 11 dining venues and four destination bars, we've created a culinary experience as diverse as it is elevated. The Fore is our multi-restaurant concept that evolves throughout the day, comprised of Umi Kei, Madame Li, Mirabelle, and The Bombay Club. You'll also find Italian-inspired glamour at Rialto, Mykonos-chic at Iliana, and Japanese refinement at Kinugawa. In the Lobby Lounge, we are proud to present the first partnership outside Paris with the legendary Pierre Hermé, whose pâtisserie and viennoiserie are served in a setting designed for quiet indulgence.

Our approach to wellness is equally progressive. The three-level Talise Spa reimagines well-being as a holistic journey, combining traditional therapies with the latest in high-tech treatments. Cryotherapy, ChromoSpace, the iDome Infra-Red Triple Detox and a Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber are all available, alongside a dedicated female-only floor and our exclusive Remedy Suite, ensuring a deeply personalised and inclusive experience for every guest.

But more than anything, we've created a modern majlis – a gathering place that reflects Dubai's spirit of innovation, community, and connection. This extends through our design, local partnerships, and a philosophy of generous, unhurried hospitality that makes every guest feel not like a visitor, but a part of the story.

Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab is a place to belong, discover, and be inspired. For me personally, it's an honour to bring this to life alongside a team of passionate, dedicated professionals who have poured their heart into every detail. Being part of this extraordinary chapter in Jumeirah's legacy is something I'm immensely proud of – and I invite you to come and discover it for yourself. **BT**

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England's capital continues to draw in travellers from the GCC and beyond

THE UK HAS been a prime destination for travellers from the Middle East region for decades already – but this year, this is expected to rise significantly, with a record number of tourists from the UAE and Gulf regions anticipated to visit (and spend at least £3.5 billion while they're there). One of the oldest cities in the world, London – nicknamed "The Big Smoke" – is a must-visit destination, known for its cosmopolitan essence and timeless charm.

→

MORNING

You can access the city from several airports: London City (LCY), London Stanstead (STN), London Luton (LTN), London Gatwick (LGW), London Southend (SEN), and Heathrow (LHR). You can reach the centre of the city via taxi, rideshare, private car, or the train. If you have just 24 hours, it's easiest to fly into Heathrow and take the Tube, the underground public transport system.

The standard one-way cost with an Oyster or contactless debit/credit card is £7 GBP for zone 1. The airport provides luggage storage at £10 for 0-3 hours, £25 for 24-48 hours, and 72+ hours, costing an extra £10 for every 24 hours. Getting off at Piccadilly Circus will put you in the heart of the city, giving you easy access to almost anywhere in the centre. Walk 10 minutes south to Trafalgar Square, a place of significance since the 1200s, which commemorates the Battle of Trafalgar when Britain won the Napoleonic Wars over France. The National Gallery, founded in 1824, sits right in the square. From there walk down Whitehall, towards the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, passing Horse Guards Parade, where you can take a photo with soldiers on guard with a horse. You'll also pass Downing Street, where Number 10 sits, and where the Prime Minister lives –



although you can't walk on the street itself, for security reasons. If you'd like to visit the Houses of Parliament, the largest palace in the UK, you can contact an MP for a tour inside during the weekday. Westminster Abbey is a stone's throw away, and it's where Britain's monarchs are crowned.

AFTERNOON

Come lunch, a quintessential pub experience can be had at 10 Bridge Street, across from the Houses of Parliament. At St Stephen's Tavern, you can dine on British classics like fish and chips, and Cumberland sausage or pie and mash.

After lunch, walk back up Whitehall, bear right and walk to the many theatres of London's West End. From The Strand, as you head towards Holborn, you can go down New Oxford Street until it turns into Oxford Street, and pass Tottenham Court Road. One of the city's shopping hubs, it's a popular spot for shopping at well-



'If museums are more your speed, London has no shortage for every interest'

INTRO PAGE:
The Tower Bridge

TOP FROM LEFT:
Piccadilly Circus;
Trafalgar Square

BOTTOM FROM LEFT:
Hyde Park;
Big Ben
Clock Tower

known high street stores. Nearby, Soho is known for its nightlife as well as its independent boutiques, bakeries, cafés, and cutesy areas like Seven Dials. Just a 5-minute walk from here will take you through China Town then Leicester Square - a pedestrianised entertainment epicentre, filled with plenty of famous cinemas. Alternatively, you can carry on up Oxford Street to Marble Arch, where you'll hit Hyde Park and be able to relax in the 350-acre open green space. Not had your fill of shopping yet? You can also pop down the prestigious Regent Street.

If museums are more your speed, London has no shortage for every interest, from the Victoria and Albert to the Tate, the Charles Dickens Museum, The Postal Museum, the London Transport Museum, Science Museum, and plenty more.

EVENING

For the dinner hour, getting out of the tourist traps is a breath of fresh air. The residential neighbourhood

of Holland Park is a favourite all year long, and there, you can dine at Belvedere, an Italian restaurant by Chef Lello Favuzzi. The restaurant requires a walk through the park itself, where you'll find it nestled in the lavish gardens.

London's dining scene is world-renowned, and foodies will delight in its notable restaurants, such as The Ledbury, Dinner by Heston Blumenthal, and The Pem. For a more hipster-friendly alternative, check out Covent Garden, or head to Notting Hill, known for its Instagrammable iconic pastel-coloured homes and the bustling Portobello Road market. From Osteria Napoletana and Gold to Balthazar, there are plenty of good picks to eat at here.

If you're all about the view and vibe, consider a drink at Sky Garden's glass domes - or delve into a fantastical world with a West End show. **BT**

Emirates flies from Dubai to London 15 times a day, and Etihad flies there from Abu Dhabi four times a day.



A new era

The first-ever hotel in Dubai's iconic Jumeirah Beach Residence, Sheraton JBR's overhaul marks a thrilling new chapter for this coastal landmark. We spoke to Sheraton JBR & Aloft Palm Jumeirah's Multi-Property GM, **Mohamed El-Aghoury**, about it.



JBR has grown so much since you opened... talk us through the evolution.

It's fascinating to consider how much JBR has transformed! My first arrival to the area was in 2004, and I actually witnessed the very first foundations being laid for the JBR residences and the Marina. Back then, it was a very different landscape. The vision was there, of course, but the reality was just taking shape – and now, it's arguably the number one choice for tourists looking for a beach holiday experience in Dubai.

What's so remarkable is the breadth and depth of what JBR offers now. We have a fantastic selection of hotels, catering to a wide range of tastes and budgets. The restaurant scene has exploded with diverse cuisines, offering something for everyone. And, of course, the entertainment options and events have become world-class, drawing in visitors from all over the globe. It's been a privilege to see it become a key part of Dubai's identity as a leading global travel destination.

What prompted the decision to renovate – and so extensively – after 28 years?

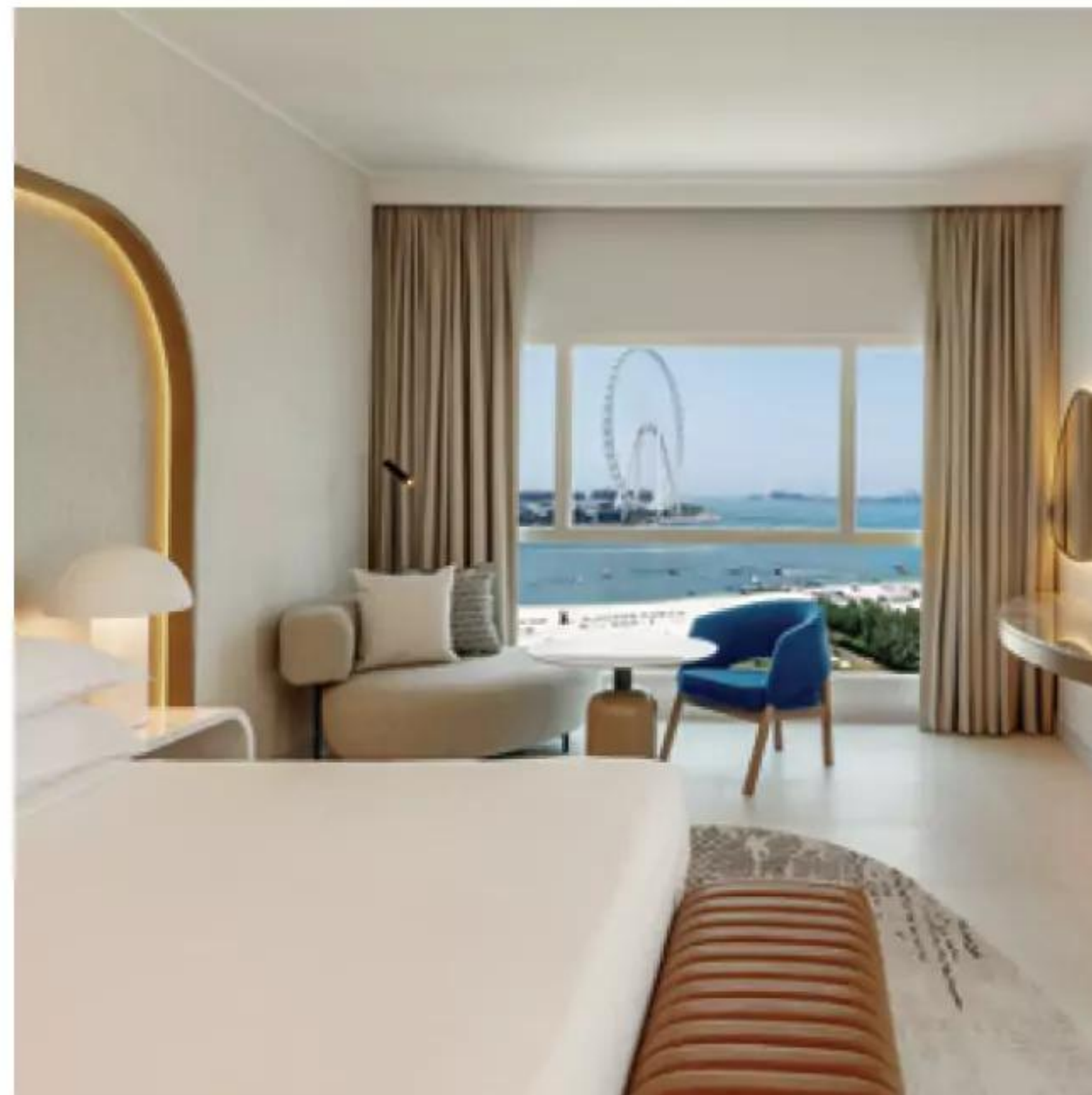
We recognised that the evolution of the

Dubai tourism landscape necessitated a significant refresh. The city has experienced an astonishing transformation, and the rapid influx of new hotels, each raising the bar for guest experience, prompted us to critically assess our offering. We wanted to ensure we remained competitive and could continue to provide the exceptional service and comfort our guests expect. It was a strategic decision driven by a desire to not only maintain our position but to elevate our standards to meet – and ideally exceed – the evolving expectations of today's discerning travellers in Dubai. We saw it as an opportunity to modernise our facilities, incorporate new technologies, and enhance the overall guest experience, ensuring we remain a top choice for years to come.

Tell us about the redesign.

This was an exciting project, and it's a key element of the Sheraton brand's global transformation. Our redesign reflects an updated vision with a contemporary aesthetic, featuring lighter colours, clean lines, and natural light. This creates a spacious, comfortable, and relaxing sanctuary for guests to unwind in.

We wanted the rooms to feel like an extension of the resort's environment, and we believe this contemporary design does just that. The lobby and club lounge were really key areas for us to reimagine. The overarching philosophy was to create a more dynamic and inviting environment,



prioritising a sense of community and relaxed comfort. We wanted to move away from the traditional, often formal, hotel lobby feel and instead create a space that encourages interaction and connection.

In the lobby, you'll see this reflected in the open space concept. We've incorporated comfortable seating areas, and a focal point is the community table, where guests can work, socialise, or simply relax, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging interaction between travellers.

The club lounge prioritises exclusivity and personalised service, designed as a social hub for guests to connect in an intimate setting.

The property now has two new dynamic social spaces: The Studio and The Booth. Can you tell us a bit about these?

The property's recent renovation has really focused on creating vibrant and engaging social spaces. We're particularly excited about The Studio and The Booth. The Studio provides an ideal space for those quick, informal meetings. It's designed to offer a level of privacy while still allowing guests to feel connected to the energy of the lobby. It's a great spot for a quick catch-up or a small brainstorming session. The Phone Booth is a comfortable and quiet sitting room designed specifically for taking private phone calls without disrupting other guests. We believe these new spaces reflect our commitment to providing a modern and flexible environment for all our guests.

You also have new dining outlets.

First, we've reimaged the traditional all-day dining buffet concept. Recognising that this model is becoming somewhat outdated, we've launched a vibrant Mediterranean eatery. This isn't just a place to eat; it's an experience! Secondly, we've completely revamped our lobby café. The traditional concept has been transformed into "&more," a welcoming space where guests can socialize, connect with each other, and feel a sense of belonging.

What do you hope to see as part of the hotel's new chapter?

I'm incredibly excited to see a revitalised guest experience. I hope to see a seamless blend of the classic Sheraton hospitality we know and love with modern amenities and innovative services. I'm particularly enthusiastic about the potential to create unforgettable moments for our guests.

Ultimately, I envision a thriving destination with the new Sheraton JBR, where guests love their experience and become effective ambassadors, boosting satisfaction and driving revenue growth for the hotel.

Ticking into the Future

Timeless timepieces and trends for 2025

THE LUXURY WATCH INDUSTRY is continuously evolving, marked by innovative designs, advanced technology, and an unwavering commitment to superior craftsmanship. In 2025, we're seeing watchmakers blending heritage with cutting-edge innovation, crafting exceptional timepieces that cater to both veteran collectors and those contemplating their first luxury purchase.

For anyone with an interest in fine watches, now is the opportune moment to explore the key trends poised to shape the coming year.

One of the most notable developments in the luxury watch market is the growing stabilisation of the pre-owned sector, which is becoming an increasingly integral component of the industry. While vibrant and textured dials are currently en vogue, 2025 is likely to see a shift toward more restrained, timeless designs as trends naturally evolve. The appeal of uniquely shaped watches will endure, but there may also be a revival of classic dress watches and a renewed preference for more compact case sizes.

Watches have long been crafted with purpose—whether for precision in racing, diving, or aviation. In the coming year, there is expected to be an expanded selection of smaller case sizes, particularly in the 34mm to 37mm range, but limited models in 42mm also will be prevalent, hopefully with more cross-industry collaborations, offering a more refined and adaptable option for discerning buyers.

On an industry-wide scale, the trend of cross-brand and cross-industry collaborations is set to persist. Watchmakers will continue seeking inventive partnerships to engage their established clientele while also capturing the attention of new audiences, particularly those from adjacent fields who possess both the financial capacity and the latent interest in fine timepieces yet may not have previously engaged with the world of luxury watches.

Onwards to some small, big, understated as well as grand presence watches – all adjectives we wish for each other for 2025!



CARTIER TANK LOUIS CARTIER

With a distinguished legacy spanning over 120 years, Cartier watches remain as highly sought-after today as when they first debuted. By seamlessly blending continuous innovation with a deep respect for tradition, Cartier is poised to sustain its dominance not only in the women's watch market but across the broader luxury watch sector. The brand's ability to anticipate and cater to the evolving tastes of its discerning clientele, combined with its timelessly elegant designs and strategic use of social media to engage a global audience, has solidified Cartier's position as a trailblazer in the world of horology.

The Cartier Tank is widely regarded as the brand's most iconic timepiece, with a design that has remained largely unchanged since its inception in 1917. Inspired by the angular shape of military tanks from World War I, the Tank has evolved into a symbol of refined sophistication, worn by influential figures such as Jackie Kennedy, Princess Diana, and Andy Warhol.

The Tank collection features a broad array of models, from the more accessible Tank Must to the opulent Tank Louis and Tank Americaine. Prices typically range from US\$2,500 to US\$50,000, depending on the materials, rarity, and additional elements such as diamonds or limited-edition designs. Certain Tank models, particularly vintage or limited-edition versions, tend to hold or even appreciate over time. For example, the rare vintage Tank Louis pieces or exclusive Tank Cintrée editions have demonstrated significant appreciation, making them coveted assets in the world of luxury watches.

→

PANERAI

LUMINOR TRE GIORNI PAM01628

For enthusiasts who appreciate the rich narratives behind a timepiece, this watch is a nod to a model historically worn by Italian commandos during their covert underwater missions. What truly distinguishes this piece is its dial, which features two superimposed plates – one of which is filled with Super-LumiNova – creating a striking three-dimensional effect, almost as if it is subtly backlit. It's a true classic, though undeniably bold in its size.

Panerai has unveiled the PAM01628, an updated version of the Luminor Tre Giorni, which seamlessly merges the brand's illustrious past with modern technological sophistication. Set in a durable patina steel case, this timepiece draws direct inspiration from the watches used by Italian military divers during their underwater operations. The larger diameter, crucial for visibility in those early models, is faithfully retained with the 47mm case size of this new iteration.

The dial boasts a grey-grained, black-gradient "sandwich" design, featuring luminous beige hands and hour markers that ensure exceptional legibility even in low-light environments. This iconic dial architecture, first pioneered by Panerai in the late 1930s, has evolved to its current form, with two stacked plates – the lower plate filled with Super-LumiNova™ for enhanced luminosity.

Powering the PAM01628 is the P.3000, a manually wound movement that offers a remarkable three-day power reserve, visible through the open case back. Its clean, utilitarian finishing is a tribute to the practical needs of the military divers who originally relied on these rugged instruments.



PIAGET

POLO 79

In 2024, Piaget unveiled a striking yet nostalgic timepiece in the picturesque town of Gstaad, nestled in the Swiss Alps. Showcasing a 38-millimetre case that evokes the sophisticated charm of the 1980s society of jet setters and all à la mode, this model had been highly anticipated by a growing and passionate community of watch connoisseurs and collectors.

Initially heralded as the ultimate sports watch, the Piaget Polo was both refined and pioneering. Its bracelet conformed to the wrist with unparalleled fluidity, appearing as though it were carved from a single block of gold. Despite its robust features, including shock resistance and water resistance, the Polo never compromised on luxury or exclusivity, adhering to its tradition of working solely with precious metals. The watch's sleek profile was made possible by Piaget's renowned expertise in ultra-thin mechanical and quartz movements.

A true paragon of gold craftsmanship, formerly known as the Piaget Polo, it captures the essence of the 1980s while honouring the brand's 150th anniversary. This updated version refines the original design with subtle yet significant enhancements. The quartz movement has been replaced by an in-house ultra-thin 1200P1 automatic calibre, which is visible through a sapphire case back. The case has been modestly expanded, but the overall aesthetic remains faithful to the original, with its 18-carat gold composition continuing to captivate discerning collectors. Iconic is the only way to describe this.

IMAGES SUPPLIED

ROLEX

SUBMARINER NO DATE

Historically, some of the most prudent investment choices in the Rolex collection have been the Submariner, Datejust, Daytona, and GMT-Master II. These iconic timepieces, revered for their unparalleled durability, timeless elegance, and formidable brand prestige, have consistently demonstrated robust appreciation in value. In addition, limited-edition or discontinued models such as the Explorer II, Milgauss, and Sea-Dweller are also highly coveted by investors due to their rarity and the heightened demand from collectors.

Over time, many Rolex watches have transitioned from mere symbols of affluence to sought-after assets that not only retain their value but often experience substantial appreciation. This evolution has firmly established Rolex timepieces as essential holdings for discerning collectors and astute investors.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Rolex Submariner is anticipated to maintain its esteemed position as one of the most desirable luxury watches globally. Its enduring design, combined with Rolex's meticulous approach to subtle yet impactful innovations, is expected to fuel continued demand from both collectors and investors alike.

The Submariner, long regarded as one of the most iconic and revered watches in the horological world, has consistently proven to be a top performer in terms of investment potential, cementing its status as one of the most prudent Rolex models to invest in. With its timeless aesthetic, the Submariner has shown consistent appreciation. Its sporty design and exceptional diving capabilities render it especially attractive in the secondary market, making it a coveted piece for both collectors and investors with an eye for enduring quality.



BREITLING

SUPEROCEAN HERITAGE BLACK STEEL B20 AUTOMATIC 42

In commemoration of its 140th anniversary, Breitling has introduced an exclusive series of limited-edition models featuring the esteemed Premier, Navitimer, and Chronomat collections. Each of these exceptional timepieces is strictly limited to just 140 examples and is powered by Breitling's new Caliber B19 movement – its first bespoke perpetual calendar chronograph. The Premier B19 Datora 42 140th Anniversary, crafted from 18-karat red gold, showcases elegant Arabic numerals, a contrasting minute scale, and the brand's iconic square pushers epitomise both sophistication and precision.

But here, let's talk about the Superocean Heritage B20, which emerges as a distinguished diver's watch, with its hallmark triangular hands and a unidirectional bezel encircled by a polished ceramic ring, exuding refined craftsmanship and technical prowess. Quiet luxury's appeal lies in its rarity and subtlety – qualities that demand a discerning eye to fully appreciate, with some brands struggling to capture this delicate balance.

The Superocean Heritage B20, however, seamlessly embodies this sophisticated restraint. While Breitling is renowned for its bold, performance-driven designs, the all-black B20 achieves an exquisite equilibrium of understated elegance and exceptional functionality. Offered with both a mesh-inspired rubber strap and a steel bracelet, the 42mm case rests with quiet dignity on the wrist, while the lustrous black dial introduces a richness that tempers its intensity. With a date window at 6 o'clock and meticulously proportioned indices encircling the dial, the watch achieves a strikingly harmonious and refined presence. **BT**

Our guide to... in-flight comfort

Onboard comfort is evolving - and whether you're travelling business, first, or premium economy, these picks elevate the experience

FROM ENTERTAINMENT options to physical features, technology and innovation are enabling new ways to approach the experience we can have in the skies. Even before you get on the plane, the key word is seamless: smoother, easier, less frustrating. Once you're onboard, smart seats can offer controls that let you adjust it all to your liking, with built-in massage functions, temperature control, and mood lighting. Cabin air is cleaner thanks to improved air filtration systems. Sound is better due to better audio technology - and inflight wifi and charging capabilities have both soared to new levels of convenience. Here are some of the airlines making waves...

1

Family-friendly Skycouch - aka "Cuddle Class"

In 2019, Air New Zealand introduced the Skycouch on certain flights, enabling people to turn three Economy seats into a lie-flat option complete with a cuddle-friendly belt.

2

Headset-free sound

Riyadh Air is partnering with French sound revolutionary Devialet to bring its signature acoustic technology directly into Business Elite and Business class headrests - delivering immersive, high-fidelity sound without the need for headphones.

3

Starlink power

Qatar Airways became the first leading airline in the region to offer Starlink-powered wifi onboard - for free - last May, and has now equipped the bulk of its Boeing 777 fleet with it. The airline's Airbus A350s are next!



4

Truly tailored

Lufthansa's Allegris long-haul cabins allow passengers to choose everything from their seat type (across classes) to climate, sleep needs, entertainment, and more, for ultimate personalisation.

5

AI concierges

Companies such as Delta Air Lines and Riyadh Air are investing in AI tech that can offer AI Concierge services, that can advise on itineraries, visa requirements, gate changes, just-for-you IFE choices, and more.

6

A cutting-edge seatback experience

Delta Air Lines has collaborated with global IFE tech leader Thales Avionics to introduce a next-gen Delta Sync seatback experience, with new software (including YouTube access), Bluetooth capabilities, advanced recommendation options, and a "Do Not Disturb" function. It is expected onboard select new aircraft from 2026.

7

Future vision

Premium leisure airline Beond offers the new Apple Vision Pro virtual reality (VR) headset to select passengers on its flights to the Maldives. China's Hainan Airlines also offers in-flight augmented reality (AR) experiences to its passengers in partnership with device maker Rokid.

8

A personalised jet lag advisory

Since 2019, Etihad Airways has collaborated with Panasonic to offer passengers its Jet Lag Adviser wellness solution, developed with Detalytics, offering passengers tailored tips and plans on beating jet lag through their app.



IMAGE FEODORA/ADOBE STOCK



THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

The 24th edition of the Business Traveller Middle East Awards celebrated the power players transporting the region's travel industry to the future

IN A SPECTACULAR show of excellence, the who's who of the region's travel and tourism sectors gathered at InterContinental Dubai Festival City in the evening on 28 April, to celebrate the 2025 Business Traveller Middle East Awards.

The event - a high-profile gala ceremony attended by the leading names, C-suite leaders, and industry experts in aviation, hospitality, and beyond - was an elegant affair filled with exceptional achievements driven by formidable innovation and forward-thinking vision.

More than 350 guests were present as we honoured leaders in business as well as leisure travel and tourism, with 40 award categories across three main divisions.

The Guest of Honour was Simone Heng. A human connection expert, best-selling author, and the founder of ThoughtLeadersNow.com, Heng sits on the advisory board

ABOVE: A group of winners celebrate on stage at the Business Traveller Middle East Awards 2025

for the Foundation for Social Connection in the United States. The global keynote speaker - whose client list includes Fortune 500 companies and globally-renowned names including Harvard University, Google, Meta, Amazon, KPMG, Lucasfilm, and the United Nations - shared how she travels the world to speak on the importance of human connection in a truly impactful world and workplace. Heng inspired attendees with her passionate advocacy of face-to-face connection: a key value that the aviation, tourism, and hospitality industries foster every day.

The highly-anticipated ceremony is a fixture on the region's annual calendar for celebrating the companies at the forefront of business travel. This year, Emirates took home four major awards, including 'Airline with the Best Premium Economy Class', 'Airline with the Best First Class', and 'Best Airline Worldwide'. Qatar Airways was also recognised with three key awards, including 'Airline with the Best Business Class', 'Airline with the Best Frequent Flyer Programme', and 'Best Regional Airline Serving the Middle East'. From the UAE capital, Etihad Airways was named 'Airline with the Best Cabin Crew', as well as 'Airline with the Best Economy Class'. flydubai continues



TOP FROM LEFT: Julian Gregory, founder of the Business Traveller brand and director of Business Traveller Media Limited; Trophies; Live entertainment

ABOVE: A packed room of guests

LEFT: Our Guest of Honour for 2025, Simone Heng



The Business Traveller Middle East Awards was based on nominations and votes cast online by our valued readers. The shortlist, highly-commended names, and winners were determined through a rigorous and impartial process.

to impress with its ever-expanding network, with the well-deserved title of 'Airline with the Best Connectivity in the Middle East'. The hub of Dubai International Airport was once again named 'Best Airport in the Middle East', while Dubai Duty Free won 'Best Duty Free Shopping in the Middle East'. From the wider global network, Singapore Airlines was deemed 'Best Asian Airline Serving the Middle East' - and Singapore Changi Airport crowned 'Best Airport

in the World' - while Turkish Airlines claimed the title of 'Best European Airline Serving the Middle East'. Hotels and hospitality brands from 24 categories were also recognised. InterContinental Hotels & Resorts took home four awards, including the coveted accolade of 'Best Hotel Brand Worldwide', while Radisson won 'Best Hotel Brand in the Middle East'. Marriott swept the wins with six awards, while Four Seasons Hotel Dubai International Financial Centre won 'Best Business Hotel in Dubai' - and Rosewood Abu Dhabi made a grand entrance as 'Best Business Hotel in Abu Dhabi'. On the lighter side of life, Rixos The Palm Hotel & Suites won 'Best Leisure Hotel in the UAE', and Marriott Resort Palm Jumeirah, Dubai, won 'Best Leisure Hotel in the Middle East'. The 'Best Bleisure Hotel in the UAE' title - introduced last year - was claimed by InterContinental Residences Dubai Business Bay for 2025, while our new category of 'Best Bleisure Hotel in the Middle East' was scooped by Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh at Kingdom Center. The special category of 'Overall Best Business Hotel in the Middle East' went to Shangri-La Jeddah. Meanwhile, Ascott received the title of 'Best Serviced Apartments Brand in the Middle East'. As the Middle East embraces the brink of a new frontier - through innovative new projects that are making headlines around the world - it is time to not only redefine what is possible, but write a triumphant new story that sets the region as the global travel industry's new centre. Read on to discover the full list of winners!



**BEST REGIONAL AIRLINE
SERVING THE MIDDLE EAST**
Qatar Airways

**BEST ASIAN AIRLINE
SERVING THE MIDDLE EAST**
Singapore Airlines

**BEST EUROPEAN AIRLINE
SERVING THE MIDDLE EAST**
Turkish Airlines

**AIRLINE WITH THE BEST
CONNECTIVITY IN THE
MIDDLE EAST**
flydubai

BEST AIRLINE WORLDWIDE
Emirates



FLYING HIGH Qatar Airways took home three awards, including Best Business Class



1) Etihad Airways received the award for 'Airline with the Best Cabin Crew'; 2) Dr. Nejib Ben-Kheder and Adil Al Ghaith of Emirates with Guest of Honour Simone Heng; 3) Paul Starrs of Qatar Airways with Simone Heng; 4) David Pinches of Singapore Airlines with *Business Traveller Middle East* Editor Yi-Hwa Hanna; 5) Etihad Airways took home the award for 'Airline with the Best Economy Class'; 6) Turkish Airlines won 'Best European Airline Serving the Middle East'; 7) flydubai's Mohamed Hareb AlMheiri and Mohamed Hassan received the award for 'Airline with the Best Connectivity in the Middle East'; 8) Anthony Milne of Motivate Media Group presented another award to Emirates



BEST AIRLINES

Your favourite carriers for business and pleasure

**AIRLINE WITH THE
BEST CABIN CREW**
Etihad Airways

**AIRLINE WITH THE
BEST ECONOMY CLASS**
Etihad Airways

**AIRLINE WITH THE BEST
PREMIUM ECONOMY CLASS**
Emirates

**AIRLINE WITH THE BEST
BUSINESS CLASS**
Qatar Airways

**AIRLINE WITH THE
BEST FIRST CLASS**
Emirates

**AIRLINE WITH THE
BEST FREQUENT FLYER
PROGRAMME**
Qatar Airways Privilege Club





1) Kelvin Tan of Singapore Changi Airport received the coveted award for 'Best Airport in the World' 2) Dubai International Airport won the award for 'Best Airport in the Middle East' 3) Anthony Milne presented Dubai Duty Free's Sinead El Sibai and Ramesh Cidambi with the title of 'Best Duty Free Shopping in the Middle East' 4) Emirates First Class Lounge, Dubai International Airport was named 'Best Airport Lounge in the Middle East'

CATEGORY

BEST AIRPORTS

Hubs around the world continue to up their game with upgraded dining, leisure and entertainment facilities



BEST AIRPORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Dubai International Airport

BEST DUTY FREE SHOPPING IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Dubai Duty Free

BEST AIRPORT LOUNGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Emirates First Class Lounge, Dubai International Airport

BEST AIRPORT IN THE WORLD
Singapore Changi Airport

CATEGORY

BEST HOTELS

The best accommodation for busy corporate travellers looking for comfortable beds and superior service

BEST NEW BUSINESS HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort
HC: Radisson Blu Hotel Riyadh Convention & Exhibition Center

BEST REFURBISHED HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Fairmont Dubai
HC: Jumeirah Dar Al Masyaf

BEST AIRPORT HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Premier Inn Dubai International Airport
HC: Radisson Hotel Riyadh Airport

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN DUBAI

Four Seasons Hotel Dubai International Financial Centre
HC: InterContinental Dubai Festival City

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN ABU DHABI

Rosewood Abu Dhabi
HC: W Abu Dhabi - Yas Island

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN THE NORTHERN EMIRATES

The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, Al Wadi Desert
HC: Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN EGYPT

InterContinental Citystars Cairo
HC: Crowne Plaza West Cairo - Arkan

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN QATAR

Marriott Marquis City Center Doha Hotel
HC: Hyatt Regency Oryx Doha

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN KUWAIT

Grand Hyatt Kuwait
HC: Arabella Beach Hotel Kuwait, Vignette Collection



1) David Fairservice of Motivate Media Group presented Maha Bourachi of The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort with the award for 'Best New Business Hotel in the Middle East'; 2) Four Seasons Hotel Dubai International Financial Centre won 'Best Business Hotel in Dubai'; 3) The team at Fairmont Dubai took home the trophy for 'Best Refurbished Hotel in the Middle East'; 4) Team Marriott Resort Palm Jumeirah, Dubai celebrated a win for 'Best Leisure Hotel in the Middle East'; 5) Premier Inn Dubai International Airport won 'Best Airport Hotel in the Middle East'; 6) The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, Al Wadi Desert took home the prize of 'Best Business Hotel in the Northern Emirates'



BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN BAHRAIN

The Diplomat Radisson Blu
Hotel, Residence & Spa,
Manama

HC: Mövenpick Hotel
Bahrain

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN OMAN

JW Marriott Hotel Muscat

HC: InterContinental Muscat

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN RIYADH

voco Riyadh

HC: Radisson Hotel &
Residence Riyadh Olaya

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN JEDDAH

Shangri-La Jeddah

HC: Jeddah Marriott Hotel
Madinah Road

BEST BLEISURE HOTEL IN THE UAE

InterContinental Residences
Dubai Business Bay

HC: Taj Dubai

BEST BLEISURE HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST (EXCLUDING UAE)

Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh
at Kingdom Center

HC: Dead Sea Marriott
Resort & Spa

BEST LEISURE HOTEL IN THE UAE

Rixos The Palm Hotel & Suites

HC: Address Beach Resort

BEST LEISURE HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Marriott Resort Palm
Jumeirah, Dubai

HC: Anantara Mina Ras
Al Khaimah Resort

OVERALL BEST BUSINESS HOTEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Shangri-La Jeddah

7) The team from InterContinental Residences Dubai Business Bay received the award for 'Best Bleisure Hotel in the UAE'; 8) Rosewood Abu Dhabi won 'Business Hotel in Abu Dhabi'; 9) Marriott Marquis City Center Doha Hotel received the award for 'Best Business Hotel in Doha'; 10) Ashley Jacobs of Jacobsons presented Ramzi Sway of Grand Hyatt Kuwait with the award for 'Best Business Hotel in Kuwait'; 11) Essam Al Khatib of voco Riyadh received the award for 'Best Business Hotel in Riyadh'; 12) Chris McFall and Philma Gomes-Ellis of Shangri-La Jeddah received the trophy of 'Overall Best Business Hotel in the Middle East'



THERE WERE 40 CATEGORIES IN THIS YEAR'S AWARDS



1) Business Traveller founder Julian Gregory presented InterContinental Hotels & Resorts with the award for 'Best Hotel Brand Worldwide'; 2) Marriott Bonvoy won 'Best Hotel Loyalty Programme in the Middle East'; 3) Address Hotels + Resorts won 'Best Luxury Hotel Brand in the Middle East'; 4) Motivate Media Group's Chaitali Khimji presented team Ascott with the award for 'Best Serviced Apartments Brand in the Middle East'; 5) Team Rixos took home the trophy for 'Best Lifestyle Hotel Brand in the Middle East'; 6) Radisson was named 'Best Hotel Brand in the Middle East'; 7) Rove Hotels won 'Best Budget Hotel Brand in the Middle East'

CATEGORY

BEST BRANDS

The top brands that travellers can count on for top-notch service, a strong identity, and accommodation they can count on



**BEST SERVICED APARTMENTS BRAND
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**
Ascott

**BEST HOTEL LOYALTY PROGRAMME
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**
Marriott Bonvoy

**BEST BUDGET HOTEL BRAND
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**
Rove Hotels

**BEST LIFESTYLE HOTEL BRAND
IN MIDDLE EAST**
Rixos

**BEST LUXURY HOTEL BRAND
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**
Address Hotels + Resorts

BEST HOTEL BRAND IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Radisson

BEST HOTEL BRAND WORLDWIDE
InterContinental Hotels & Resorts





Sponsors

Deloitte.

wegopro **BLACKLANE**

Beverage partner: **african + eastern** INSPIRING GREAT BLENDS

Vote processing partner: **JACOBSONS** better experiences

Social media partner: **mat.in.x** public relations "Adding value to your identity"

Presented by

MOTIVATE
MEDIA GROUP

BACK TO THE ROOTS

WORDS YI-HWA HANNA

As science, technology, and other advances make it easier than ever to trace our past, heritage tourism is having a moment

IMAGE ROBERTO MOIOLA/SYSAWORLDGETTY IMAGES

A

s a mixed-race third-culture kid – who grew up as a lifelong expat in a country that neither of my parents were citizens of – the concept of home has always been one that holds great intrigue for me. I've even considered trying a DNA test, in the hope that it

might help me discover and understand more of who I am, where I came from, and ultimately, how that understanding of my and my family's past can help me move forward in life in the most fulfilled way.

Genetic ancestry tests do have their limits, but ever since the technology and science behind it has become more affordable and widely available in recent years, the concept of exploring our heritage in new and in-depth ways has taken the world by storm. A report by MIT Technology Review found that by 2018, the number of people who had purchased consumer DNA was equivalent to the total of all of those who had done so in all previous years combined – and by the start of 2019, the number of people who had taken a DNA test through four leading commercial ancestry and health companies (and in doing so, adding data on their genetic makeup to their vast pool of information banks) had reached more than 26 million. And people's interest in exploring their past doesn't seem to be slowing down, either: the global direct-to-consumer genetic testing market is anticipated to be worth US\$9.2 billion by 2033, up 17.30% from US\$2.57 billion in 2025.



But the tests aren't the only way people have become more interested in exploring their past: another rising trend is that of heritage tourism, or genealogy-related travel. Also occasionally referred to as roots tourism, this type of travel consists of people travelling to certain holiday destinations specifically with the intent of connecting with their roots, whether that is tracing back ancestral connections to walk in the footsteps of their forefathers, or learning more about the way their forebears might have once lived.

It's certainly a niche, but one that is also on the rise. Historically, ancestral tourism is also considered a form of enabling cultural diplomacy. A 2022 survey by the Travel Industry Association found that 34% of travellers surveyed were interested in visiting locations related to their ancestral homelands, and a 2019 Airbnb survey found the number of people travelling to retrace their roots had increased by 500% within a four-year span.

A Journey To The Past

Tourism boards across the world, too, have jumped on the trend. Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, for instance, have highlighted familial connections in past campaigns, under themes like the "year of homecoming", "family history year", or "year of history, heritage, and archaeology". Travel insurance brand World Nomads recently partnered with Ancestry.com to run a competition offering one winner (and a plus-one) the chance to trace their family history, as part of their Relative Distance campaign.

Countries such as Ireland, Scotland, Italy, Japan, and China are among the most popular for heritage tourism, with an enormous amount of people from the USA visiting these destinations in the name of reconnecting with their ancestral home – even when it's a home they might never have set foot in before. Other such destinations growing in popularity include the diaspora of Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Arab world. If a certain part of the world has experienced mass migration, there is a growing market for heritage tourists among its diaspora – and with the historical events that led to these migrations often being linked to tragedies and major incidents of historical and/or social change such as war, it can be quite an emotional journey, too. In 2018, The



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Connecting with the past through historical sights; Cultural tours with history; Private experiences can enrich a historical family journey; African safaris can provide depth with a wow-factor



→

Cunard Line took travellers on the iconic Queen Mary 1 cruise liner for a special voyage from Southampton to New York, with genealogists on board to assist specific guests in exploring their individual family trees. Prior to setting off, these travellers – six travellers and six crew members – were given the opportunity to take DNA tests and submit some background history on their families to the genealogists, before some intimate and profound discoveries during the cruise. The trip also offered these guests a guided tour of Ellis Island upon arrival in the USA.

In recent years, a growing number of companies have started offering special trips for the modern genealogical traveller. Navigating such a journey can be just as difficult in terms of logistics as it might be emotionally, from planning a suitable itinerary to gaining front-row access to authentic and historical customs that might be very personally significant – and a firm that can help to curate a custom plan can be worth its weight in gold.

One such company is Lushescapes. The brainchild of entrepreneur Abhishek Dadlani, the company was founded with the intent to reshape the global luxury travel landscape by offering bespoke experiences that connect discerning travellers to the heart and soul of the world's most exclusive destinations. The company is committed to creating transformative journeys that go beyond opulence, as it seeks to be a beacon for ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWIs) seeking not just destinations, but stories that will resonate for a lifetime. Lushescapes hosts a wide variety of trips, trying to treat each individual itinerary as its own masterpiece, and has organised everything from exclusive explorations of the private palaces of Rajasthan and ultra-VIP experiences in the Maldives to unforgettable bespoke excursions in awe-inspiring destinations, like the Arctic wilderness, Botswana's Kalahari Desert, or the culturally-rich landscape of Peru. One of its proudest achievements, however, was bringing a family closer to their roots through an intercontinental genealogical quest.

"It was one of our most emotionally enriching and logistically intricate journeys to date," says Dadlani. "A European family approached us to design a legacy trip that would trace their ancestry across three continents – Europe, Asia, and Africa – over the course of two months. It took nearly nine months of planning and spanned 15 cities, including remote villages, heritage towns, and sacred sites. The scope of the journey went beyond discovery; it was about intergenerational connection, emotional healing, and rediscovery of self and story. It's the kind of project that defines what we stand for at Lushescapes," he explained.

To prepare for the trip, Dadlani's team collaborated closely with genealogists, anthropologists, and regional historians to build a clear, evidence-backed lineage. "We sourced rare archival material from Europe and Asia, engaged local scholars in Africa, and reconstructed timelines using a combination of oral storytelling and documented history. In Africa, the family had ties to a community with unique spiritual traditions, which added a profound emotional layer. This wasn't just about



ABOVE: Abhishek Dadlani

BELOW: Food can be a means of paying homage to ancient cooking techniques and methods

mapping a family tree – it was about understanding cultural intersections, personal belief systems, and what legacy truly means," he said. "Each property was chosen to reflect a chapter of the family's ancestral narrative. In Europe, they stayed in restored manors that once belonged to noble relatives. In Asia, we arranged traditional courtyard homes near ancient temples. In Africa, their accommodation included a historic estate once used for tribal council gatherings, now reimagined as a luxury retreat. These spaces weren't just luxurious – they were emotionally symbolic. Every residence brought them closer to their roots, offering privacy, comfort, and immersive experiences that allowed them to reflect on their lineage with depth and clarity," he continued.

Lushescapes' goal was to help strengthen the family's bonds, deepen their connection to shared values, and resonate with their forefathers' beliefs. To accomplish it, Dadlani sought to turn the journey "into a living ritual". He explained: "In Africa, they participated in a cleansing ceremony led by tribal elders that symbolised generational renewal. In Europe, they visited ancestral chapels and lit candles in memory of those who came before them. In Asia, we created a private retreat space for intergenerational dialogue – supported by facilitators trained in legacy storytelling. Every cultural experience was customised to align with their personal values and historical identity, making the journey not just educational, but deeply healing and unifying."

'It was about intergenerational connection, emotional healing, and rediscovery of self'



IMAGES LUSHESCAPES



ABOVE: Healing - in multiple ways - and stillness are key aspects of modern luxury



LEFT: Private companies like Lushescapes can help to curate bespoke itineraries for travellers on a genealogical quest

A New Kind of Reward

As profound of an experience as such a trip might be, taking one can be quite costly, making it feel somewhat inaccessible outside of a certain subset of travellers – but while it is certainly more challenging to do it without the aid of a company such as Dadlani's, it's by no means impossible, either. For anyone wishing to do something like this on their own, Dadlani suggests starting with what you know. "Even a short visit to your ancestral hometown or a weekend trip guided by a local historian can be powerful. The depth lies in the intention, not the duration or cost. We often create shorter, regionally focused journeys for clients who want to explore their heritage meaningfully without the scale of a global expedition. Focus on storytelling, cultural rituals, and symbolic moments. At Lushescapes, we believe that everyone deserves to feel rooted, seen, and connected – and we'll always find a way to make that possible," he says. Dadlani believes that transformational travel always starts with intention: "We don't ask 'where do



Future History

The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi)'s 2020 campaign placed a focus on conserving the past through a modern heritage initiative, that saw it identify, protect, and maintain the sites that narrate the country's recent history. Saudi Arabia, too, has doubled down on protecting its country's historical sites amidst the breakneck pace of its recent tourism developments, all of which can also act as a pre-emptive move for future heritage tourists.

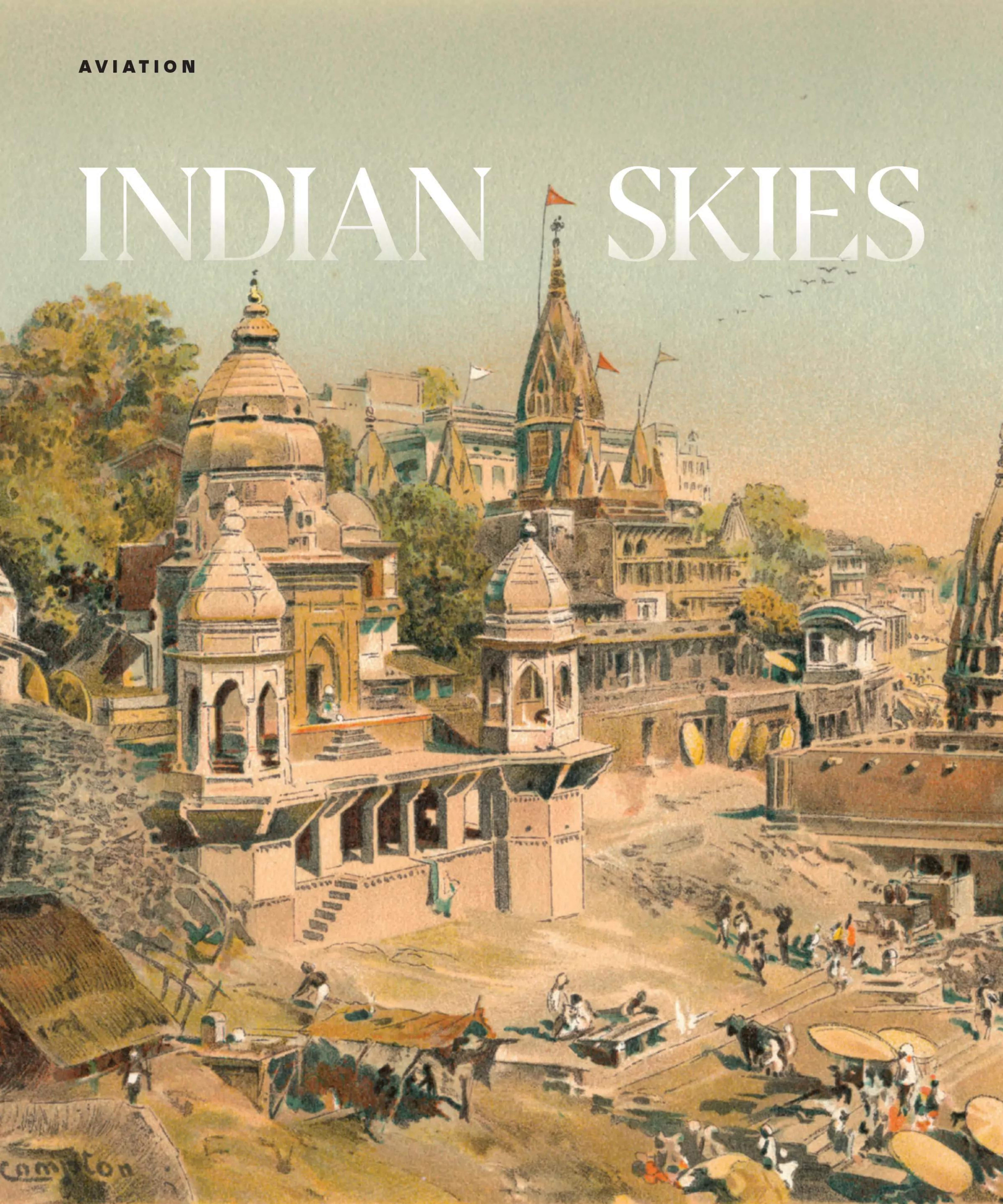
you want to go?' We ask 'what do you want to feel?' From there, we shape everything – the locations, the pace, the people they meet, and the stories they'll hear. We blend outer exploration with inner clarity. Whether it's a personal ritual by the fjords of Norway, or a sacred fire ceremony in Morocco, every element is curated to help our travellers find something – within themselves. It's about designing journeys that are not just seen, but truly felt. One of my favourite stories is of a woman who embarked on a silent journey across the Himalayas after the loss of her mother. Every stop held space for grief, but also for healing. These are not just trips – they are inner dialogues that unfold across landscapes. The destinations are real, but the journey is deeply personal."

Dadlani believes that this type of travel is an opportunity that everyone should undertake at some point in their life. "Because it roots you in something bigger than yourself. In a world that moves quickly and often feels disconnected, heritage travel offers grounding. It answers questions we didn't know we were asking – about identity, belonging, and purpose. It invites you to meet not only the past, but also yourself in a new way. These journeys aren't just about understanding where you come from – they are about remembering who you are. And that kind of emotional clarity has a ripple effect. It strengthens relationships, reframes priorities, and often becomes a turning point in people's lives," he says. "It's not just travel – it's an investment in understanding. Discovering your roots gives you a sense of emotional architecture. It builds resilience, self-awareness, and gratitude. For families, it becomes a shared narrative that transcends generations. You carry stories, wisdom, and emotional inheritance that are priceless. If someone has the means, they owe it to themselves and their descendants to walk those ancestral paths, to reclaim their narrative, and to reconnect with legacy in the most human, elegant, and immersive way possible," he says.

Dadlani grew up in India, "a place where every journey holds a deeper meaning – where movement is symbolic, and every step is rooted in history, belief, and emotion," explaining that from an early age, he realised that travel could be a tool for self-awakening, not just exploration. In today's world, "where everything is fast and commoditised," he believes that "true luxury is space, stillness, and meaning. It is the ability to slow down, to be present, to connect deeply – with yourself, with others, with a place. Memories you can revisit, moments that shift your perspective, and time that is truly yours – this is the currency of modern luxury. People are tired of generic travel. "They are hungry for moments that feel like theirs. In a time when time itself feels scarce, every journey needs to feel intentional. Travel is no longer just about seeing the world – it's about being seen by it, and seeing yourself in a new light. That's why personalisation has moved from a luxury to a necessity. It's how we ensure travel feels meaningful.

"It's the difference between a vacation and a voyage of becoming. A typical trip offers escape, entertainment, or relaxation. But a journey rooted in self-discovery alters you. It stays with you, challenges your worldview, deepens your emotional vocabulary, and leaves you with more clarity than when you began. There's space for quiet, depth in every encounter, and meaning behind each stop. And that makes all the difference," he says. **BT**

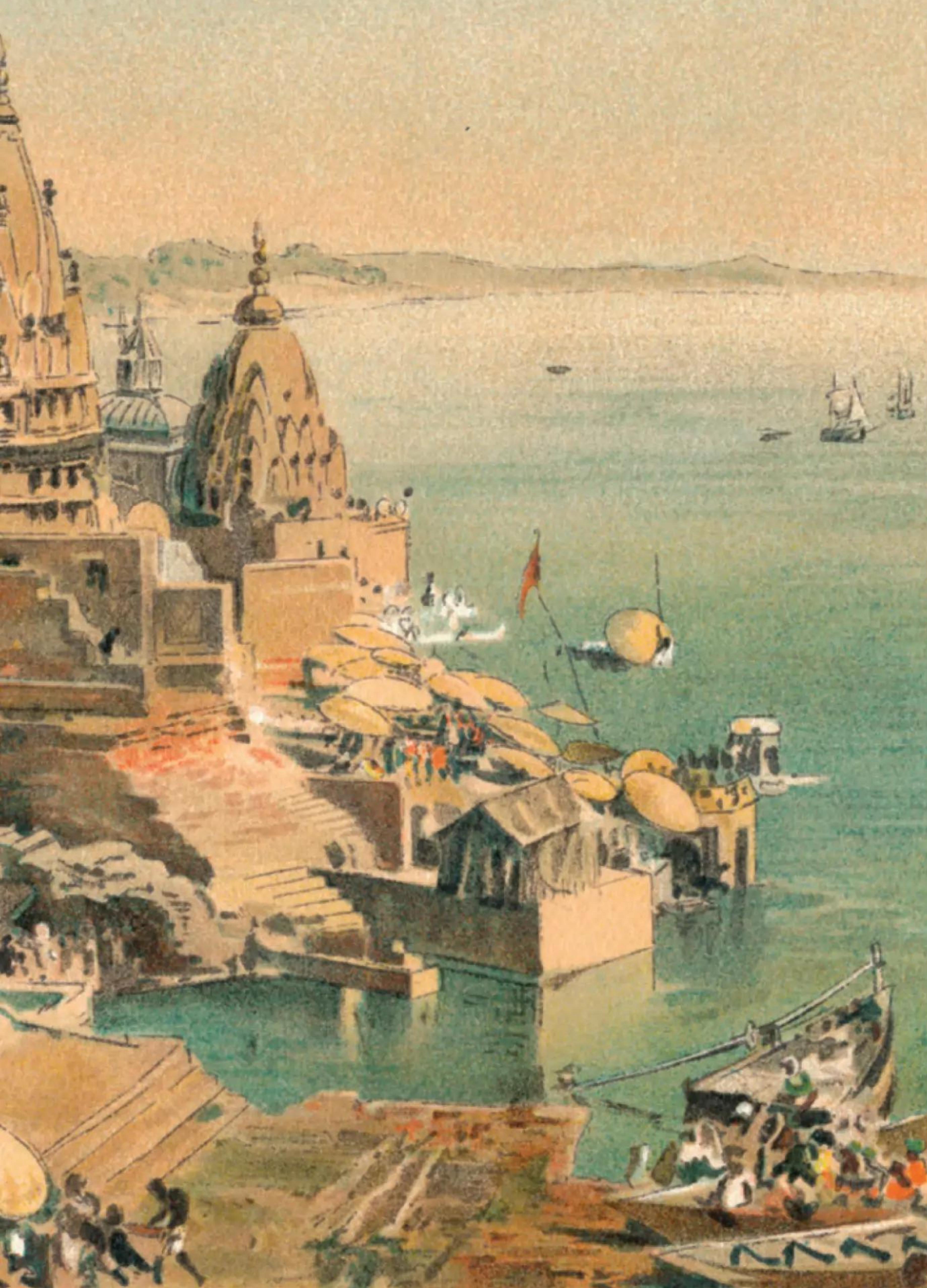
INDIAN SKIES



EXPAND

A soaring aviation sector is reshaping the region into a global air hub

WORDS **FREDDIE REIDY**
ILLUSTRATION **EDWARD THEODORE COMPTON/GETTY IMAGES**



Global aviation is booming in 2025, with revenue set to top US\$1 trillion for the first time according to industry body IATA. Nowhere is this growth more keenly felt than in India.

The rise of Indian aviation has been a remarkable journey, driven by a combination of economic growth, policy reforms, and an expanding middle class. The liberalisation of the aviation sector, introduction of low-cost carriers like IndiGo, and major restructuring of flag carrier Air India, have all played a pivotal role in boosting the nation's commercial aviation sector.

The government's push for infrastructure development, including the expansion of airports, has also contributed significantly to the industry's growth. As a result, India now boasts one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world. Here we take a look at what's to come.

Romantic beginnings

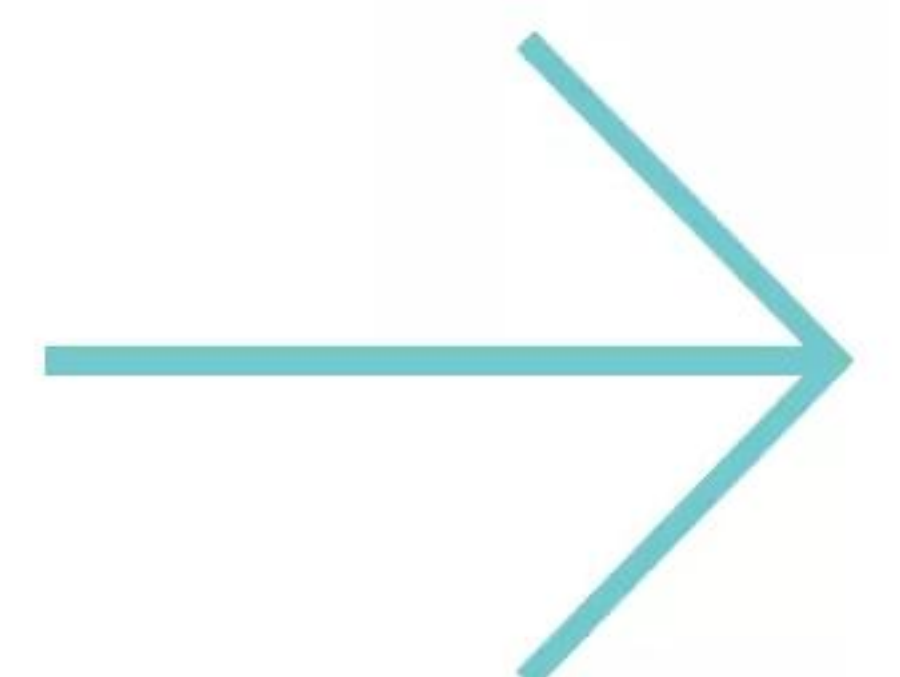
Integral to the country's evolutionary tale is Air India, and the 'father of Indian civil aviation' behind its launch. JRD Tata, scion of the Tata Sons conglomerate and one of the first person to obtain a commercial pilot licence in India, founded what would become the nation's flag carrier in 1932. Tata had won a contract from British Airways' forerunner Imperial Airways, delivering post with a single propeller monoplane in an era when all-wood aircraft ruled the skies. Over time, the route network expanded across India, with passengers joining the postal bags.

The post-independence government took a sizeable stake in Tata's airline. For a time, this worked well, and Air India became Asia's first airline to enter the jet age, connecting India to the rest of the world with a Boeing 707 in 1960, before later introducing the 747 in 1971.

After JRD Tata stood down though, the airline went into a slow and steady decline, choked by government inefficiency and failure to innovate. By the aviation downturn of the early 2000s, the airline was in dire straits. The once popular Palace in the Sky livery, recognisable by its window decals or 'Mudra', became synonymous with faded glory.

In 2015, Tata Sons made a long-awaited return to the industry, launching Vistara in partnership with Singapore Airlines. The full-service carrier set a new standard in India and quickly established a reputation for quality – consistently ranked in the Top 20 by SKYTRAX for the past decade, while Air India has repeatedly failed to make the top 100.

When the Indian government announced a fresh impetus to reprivatise Air India, the stage was set for a comeback. Vistara was run alongside Air India until the two airlines merged in 2024,



AVIATION

→

forming the Air India Group that includes Air India, Air India Express, Vistara and remnants of AirAsia India.

Upgraded future

Now, the airline hopes to rekindle the original spirit of innovation, as it embarks on a massive programme of fleet upgrades and the acquisition of over 110 new short-haul and 75 long-haul aircraft.

Speaking to *Bloomberg* in January, Air India's CEO Campbell Wilson outlined a clear but challenging mission to "transform Air India from, frankly, a laggard in terms of product and experience, to a peer of world's best."

The existing fleet is undergoing a huge upgrade programme, including the retrofitting of brand-new business class suites based on the UK-designed Collins Aerospace. Gone is the 2-3-2 seating configuration and in comes a suite with a closing door – something you still can't find on rival carrier Emirates. A wardrobe and electronic blinds – features usually reserved for first class – round out the business offering. The A350 aircraft even features a social area at the back of the cabin. Equipped with a self-service bar, the innovation is a nod to the airline's illustrious past and a signal of intent in capturing more of the discerning international business market.

Aside from the hard product, the company also rebranded, ushering in a more contemporary livery while continuing to fly the flag for Indian culture with new uniforms designed by Manish Malhotra. Inflight dining menus have also been updated, while business class amenity kits received a revamp courtesy of Ferragamo – complete with the increasingly rare inclusion of pyjamas, burnishing the airline's luxury credentials. In premium economy, customers are also treated to a TUMI amenity kit, outshining many of those typically found in business.

Global connections

Connectivity is also a focus. Last November, Air India's flagship A350 touched down in New York's JFK for the first time, while Seattle and Los Angeles will be added to the transatlantic network later in 2025. As part of the cabin retrofit programme, the airline is prioritising availability of the new product on the Singapore and Frankfurt routes. Plus, it's offering both day and night services to Frankfurt and Paris for additional flexibility.

The airline is also looking to leverage its position within Star Alliance to capture some of the market from Europe to Australia and Southeast Asia with a change in Delhi. Air India offer flights to both Sydney and Melbourne on its Boeing 787 Dreamliner, with further options via a codeshare agreement with Qantas.

It's not just India looking out, the world is also looking in. Speaking to *Business Traveller* at the launch of a new route to Bengaluru, Virgin Atlantic CEO Shai Weiss said: "The number of people who fly internationally out of India is about 1.5 flights per 100 people. It's about a fifth of what it is in China. When you look at the potential here, we're just at



'The world is looking at India on how to improve their aviation networks'

the beginning of this revolution. It's no surprise that the largest number of planes on order are going into India...

"My expectation is that [our Indian routes] will do really well in the next five to ten years. This bet on India, which we started 25 years ago, is coming into the next phase. About 10 per cent of our capacity is to India."

On the home front

For the wider Indian market, it is the utilisation of its domestic network that is key for wider economic growth. Speaking to news agency ANI at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, minister of civil aviation Ram Mohan Naidu highlighted the opportunities the nation holds: "We have become the third largest domestic aviation network. Now the whole world is looking at India on how to improve their aviation networks."

One domestic success story is IndiGo. Established during Air India's woes in the early 2000s, it quickly

IMAGES MUSTAFA TAUSEEF/AF, SUNIL GHOSH/HINDUSTAN TIMES/GETTY IMAGES

became the country's largest airline, competing against Air India's low-cost domestic Express brand.

IndiGo itself is on a journey of mass growth, with over 400 aircraft on the books and a back order of over 1,340 aircraft keeping Toulouse's Airbus site in overdrive. To put this further into perspective, in 2023 there were 700 commercial aircraft in the whole of India. IndiGo's backorder alone surpasses that figure.

The airline will also become the largest operator of the A320 family, including the new A321XLR (extra long range). This modern fleet affords a great deal of flexibility in deployment. For IndiGo, this means being able to operate the same type for a short hop from Delhi to Mumbai as a flight twice the length to Bangkok.

Feeding this domestic network is key for sustained growth, so IndiGo has an additional 30 A350 wide-body aircraft on order for long-haul operations. The global aircraft shortage has caused a strategic rethink, however, with its CEO Pieter Elbers looking to utilise Norse Atlantic Airways' fleet of Boeing 787s through wet leases.

Additionally, IndiGo has an eye on routes to London, New York, Sydney and Paris, plus codeshare agreements with Virgin Atlantic and British Airways, opening up the domestic network.

Innovation has also followed expansion. IndiGo recently launched its Stretch short-haul business class product. The seat is closer to a long-haul premium economy product, but increases the route flexibility of the aircraft type and differentiates it from other low-cost rivals, thereby enticing international business travellers.



ABOVE
An IndiGo flight landed in the presence of the minister of civil aviation

BELOW LEFT
Construction work of the NIA terminal in Greater Noida

their economic potential. This easing of traffic also allows investment at Indira Gandhi. Air India, for example, will reopen its flagship lounge at the end of April after a year-long refurbishment, which forced all traffic to the third-party Encalm lounge.

With revitalised aircraft and infrastructure, will Delhi become a new global hub in the mould of Dubai or Qatar? Well, if minister Ram Mohan Naidu gets his way, then the answer's yes. "Within two years, we want to establish Delhi as a major international aviation hub," he said in Davos.

At the vast new Noida site, the Flughafen Zürich-led project aims to put technology at the centre of the airport's efficiency drive for transiting passengers, with everything from automated bag drops to biometric boarding and ordering food via an airport app.

The Noida project also reunites the team behind Oslo's Gardermoen airport, dubbed the world's greenest, who are keen to repeat their feat while still handling 500 million passengers a year when fully operational.

At another mega-project in Mumbai, the Zaha Hadid Architects-designed Navi Mumbai airport will offer another modern port into the country. The airport has a focus on intermodal travel, with connections to a new superhighway as well as serving as the terminus of the Mumbai to Hyderabad high-speed railway line.

In a decade's time, the Indian market will look totally different. The opening of Mumbai and Delhi's new airports this year will revolutionise transit travel and open India's second cities to international business. These new hubs will be joined by 15 more in the next five years, with 300 additional sites by 2047 – a far cry from the wood and canvas aircraft-led industry of the past. **BT**

Matching capacity

The pace of growth has, however, presented challenges. Delhi's Indira Gandhi airport, the nation's dominant international hub, has been running at capacity for years. Passengers transiting through the airport have become accustomed to lengthy queues for security and baggage. But, thankfully, changes are en route.

Later this year, Asia's largest airport will open to the southeast of Delhi at Noida, easing congestion at Indira Gandhi and enabling growth. The new airport's 5,000-hectare site will help serve tech giants such as Oracle, Microsoft and Google who have a substantial presence in the region, and connect the rapidly growing urban centres of Agra, Mathura and Gautam Buddha Nagar, to unlock



STAY

Hotels embrace artistic residencies to foster local talent and enhance the guest experience

CREA

WORDS **TAMSIN COCKS**

TIVE



P

artnerships with celebrity chefs, international designers and starchitects is nothing new in the hospitality world. But a new crop of creatives are finding themselves setting up shop in luxurious suites, as hotels seek to foster inspirational environments.

The trend is being driven by changing consumer demands. Travellers no longer just want a room with a view: they want a portal into the local culture. A hotel shouldn't just be a transient stop, but

part of an enriching, authentic travel experience.

Hotels have responded enthusiastically, with guided neighbourhood tours, local cookery classes, and lively event schedules all becoming commonplace. But some properties are taking things a step further, merging the world of arts into the hotel sphere by inviting artists and professionals to take up residency and share their talents with guests. It's not exactly a new trend – The Savoy, London hosted Claude Monet back in 1899 – but the latest iteration of creative collaborations is even more wide-ranging, with digital art exhibitions, poetic libations and even tarot reading experiences...

Artist in residence

Every self-respecting five-star lobby has an eye-catching mural or stunning sculpture these days, but increasingly, guests may find artworks in their room or photography exhibitions lining the corridors. At some properties, you may even find yourself chatting to in-house artists at breakfast, watching them sketch in their studio, taking part in creative workshops or purchasing their work to take home.

In 2022, Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam launched a one-off year-long residence, inviting 52 artists to stay for a week. The resulting works were collated and reproduced into a beautiful coffee table book, with some works displayed in the hotel. Similarly, Hotel Eden in Rome invited fashion illustrator Andrea Ferolla to capture sketches of the daily comings and goings in the hotel over a year. His works are displayed in the hotel's La Libreria lounge bar and have been turned into a range of fashionable accessories.

Some hotels also operate worldwide

ACE ARTISTS

Erika Weitz
at Ace Hotel
(main); Work
by Daniel
David Freeman
for Ace Hotel
(below)



initiatives. Ace Hotels has run its AIR (artist in residence) programme for close to a decade, with regular creative partnerships at properties across its portfolio. The Brooklyn property, for instance, is currently partnered with culture magazine *Byline* to champion four local artists via the theme of "art at play". This month, the spotlight is on Larissa Lockshin, whose satin paintings are on display within the hotel until May. Meanwhile in Kyoto, independent gallery and bookseller Commune has selected four emerging artists to explore the theme "good art is key to life" – find photography by Shiori Ikeno at Ace Kyoto this month.

"Our Artist in Residence programme is a natural extension of Ace Hotel's commitment to fostering creativity and supporting emerging artists," said Tokotah Ashcraft, director of partnerships and programming at Ace Hotel.

"Ace has always been a home for artists – a place where they can experiment, create and engage with the communities around them. Through the programme, we hope to inspire meaningful work that not only enriches our hotel spaces, but continues to resonate far beyond them."

For the current 2024/2025 programme, Ace is promoting a tech-forward view of what an artist residency could look like. The brand has partnered with FWB – a Web3 platform (or Web 3.0, which refers to a new kind of internet based on blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies) – and the world's first NFT gallery, Superchief Gallery, at Ace Hotel & Swim Club Palm Springs. Multidisciplinary artists Erika Weitz and Latashá will use techniques like chemical light painting and thermo-imaging to create interactive NFT works inspired by their time in the desert. The resulting exhibitions, 'HOLY WATER' and 'muva_nature,' offer hotel visitors a uniquely immersive artistic experience.

The Peninsula Hotels also has an ongoing Art in Resonance programme. This is a commission-based initiative that aims to shine a light on emerging talent and support artists with funding and logistics, while





simultaneously offering guests a deeply immersive art experience that goes beyond simply exhibiting artworks.

This year, The Peninsula has partnered with London's Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), which took place in March at its Hong Kong property – coinciding with Art Basel Hong Kong 2025. The grand lobby featured a brand-new installation, alongside two additional works, which celebrate the hotel's historic façade.

"The creative vision shared by the selected artists perfectly embodies the spirit of our new partnership," said Tim Reeve, deputy director and chief operating officer of the V&A. "Working with The Peninsula to create a greater reach for these works reflects the V&A's mission to champion design and creativity in all its forms, advance cultural knowledge and inspire makers, creators and innovators everywhere."



CULTURAL CORRIDORS
The Hoxton
Hackney Dave
Hox Gallery
launch

The writing room

Residencies expand to further art forms. Focusing on the literary arts was a natural fit for Raffles Singapore, which has inspired many authors from Ernest Hemingway to Rudyard Kipling – who famously wrote *The Jungle Book* while sitting at The Writers Bar. The hotel revived this tradition in 2019, with the launch of the Raffles Writer's Residency. Poet Madeleine Lee won the coveted spot in 2022-2023, visiting the hotel for a series of stays, which inspired a collection of 30 poems entitled *how to build a lux hotel*. Five of these poems were subsequently translated into libations by the hotel's mixologists – including *balcon*, whose cocktail counterpart features a mix of Billecart-Salmon Champagne, gin, absinthe and Perrier lemon.

HOTELS

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Tucked away in the Austrian mountains, the five-star Sonnenburg became a self-proclaimed “literary hotel” in 2016. It hosts regular events at the Sonnenburg Literary Salon, including readings, literary exchanges and author residencies. Previous names have included American author John Wray as well as Austrian writer Ursula Poznanski. You’ll also find over 1,000 books stored in book boxes throughout the property, with cosy reading nooks to consume them.

Over at The Hoxton Brussels, meanwhile, literary inspiration takes the form of The Hox Book Club curated by singer/songwriter Kriticos Mwansa, a former journalist and literary enthusiast. Here, guests are encouraged to join discussions of powerful themes evoked by the book of the month. In February, participants discussed ‘The Art of Falling in Love’, with references to *The Course of Love* by Alain De Botton, *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, and *Giovanni’s Room* by James Baldwin, among others.

House band

Perhaps you’re more of a music aficionado? W Hotels can always be counted on to turn up the volume, with larger than life events and musical collaborations. In

MUSIC MATTERS

Cercle Festival Paris 2024 presented by W Hotels



FASHION AND BEAUTY

Makeup artists are also being welcomed into the hospitality sphere. At The Dorchester Collection's **Le Meurice** (right) in Paris, a new partnership gives guests exclusive access to all the insider beauty tips and secrets – while also contributing to a worthy social cause. In January, the hotel launched a partnership with Olivier Echaudemaison – the former creative director of make-up at Guerlain. Guests can now book in for a personal consultation with the renowned make-up artist every Wednesday, with each session including practical tips and personalised recommendations using prestigious cosmetic brands. The price of a consultation starts from €450, with all proceeds going towards Maison des Femmes, an organisation dedicated to supporting women in vulnerable situations.

Meanwhile, luxury London hotel **Middle Eight** (below) launched a partnership with up-and-coming fashion designer Katie Ko last month, with



an exclusive collection unveiled in celebration of London Fashion Week. In February, the runway was transformed into a theatrical performance, choreographed by Valentino Zucchetti, the first soloist of the Royal Ballet, with arrangements by florist Hamish Powell.

The hotel's general manager Botho Stein said: “Rooted in the arts and at the heart of the city's cultural scene, Middle Eight serves as a curator of creativity and inspiration. We are proud to partner with Katie Ko, whose multi-dimensional approach shapes a cultural programme throughout the hotel. Guests can experience a tea and cocktail menu designed by Katie, alongside an art display and a lobby installation created in collaboration with botanical artist Hamish Powell. The partnership offers guests a unique artistic experience from multiple perspectives.”



'It's not just creative partnerships being sought; wellness professionals are also starting to make regular guest appearances'



2018, the branch launched its own label W Records, with tracks recorded in the brand's onsite Sound Suites, created to appeal to visiting musicians and podcasters. In 2021, the hotel launched a partnership with French media company Cercle to live-stream a performance by German electronic musician Monolink from the stunning W Maldives at Gaathafushi Island. This partnership grew in 2022, with live-streamed events from its hotels in Goa, Amman, Rome and Montreal.

Over in Music City, meanwhile, guests can get up close and personal with a real-life country musician. The Four Seasons Nashville has launched a Songwriter Experience package, which includes a private audience with a local musician who will perform original songs in your room – which, of course, has decor themed to fit (think: tables that look like record players and microphone-inspired lighting).

Wellness in situ

It's not just creative partnerships being sought; wellness professionals are also starting to make regular guest appearances. New York-based Equinox Hotels takes sleep seriously, engineering its own mattresses and bed linens, launching AM and PM rituals and offering sleep-driven spa treatments. To strengthen this offering, the group has now partnered with Dr Matthew Walker, a professor of neuroscience and psychology at the



REST BEST
Equinox Hotels takes sleep seriously

University of California and author of *Why We Sleep*.

The collaboration will see the introduction of the Equinox Hotels Sleep Lab, an immersive sleep experiment with studies led by Dr Walker.

The sleep expert has also consulted on newly designed guest rooms, which focus on sleep-optimised environments, plus a new jet lag digital solution, which will offer guests personalised strategies to manage their time zone adjustment.

Elsewhere, you'll spot nutritionists (get macro-calculated meal plans at Siro One Za'abeel in Dubai), fitness partnerships (head to Kuramathi Maldives this summer to have your child coached by football legend Harry Redknapp) and new-age spiritual guidance too (head to The Standard Miami Beach for tantric workshops with intimacy coach Michelle Alva or New York's 1 Hotel Central Park for tarot readings with Shayla Martin).

For time-poor business travellers, the combination of artistic engagement and luxury hospitality offers a convenient way to get a cultural fix and soak up some creative inspiration during your stay. Check in with your bags, check out with a bounty of new ideas. **BT**



For a city known for its densely packed streets and hectic pace of life, Hong Kong has a truly remarkable countryside

WORDS STEVE WHITE

Here be dragons

How many cities in the world have a population of millions, yet have protected about 40% of their land area? Where forests of concrete towers are backed by hillsides more tree-covered today than at any time since the Second World War? Which has a vibrant and culturally important paddling scene, and since a trawling ban was enacted at the end of 2012, boasts increasing areas of recovering coral reef?

For a place whose name conjures images of bustling streets flanked by jutting skyscrapers, Hong Kong offers surprising opportunities for a lover of the outdoors. That starts with the ease of access. Much of the countryside is cheek by jowl with city blocks, and the public transport system is extensive and affordable. The MTR (the city's underground and overground rail network) is clean and highly efficient, while ferries provide links to the outlying islands. On the roads, surprisingly cheap taxis transport you to most trailheads not already served by buses or minibuses.

All of these transport services, apart from taxis, accept the Octopus stored value card, which also works in many shops – so make this one of your first purchases on arrival in Hong Kong. Other essentials for outdoor adventures are a wide-brimmed hat to protect against the often-fierce sun and plenty of fluids. Armed with these, you are ready to explore the hills, forests, and beaches of Hong Kong.

SCALING NEW HEIGHTS

It's not hard to see why the Dragon's Back in the eastern part of Hong Kong Island is widely rated the city's best day hike, being very manageable and only a few kilometres long, yet delivering spectacular views.

From the To Tei Wan bus stop on the Shek O Road, the trail starts with the relatively short climb up to a path that winds atop the "dragon's back". Here the vegetation on the ridge is stunted by prevailing winds to form a living tunnel of greenery in places. Elsewhere, viewpoints give wide vistas which draw the eye out west over the south coast of Hong

ABOVE: Dragon's Back hiking trail on Hong Kong Island

OPPOSITE PAGE FROM LEFT: The Big Buddha on Lantau; Lion Rock overlooks Kowloon

IMAGES PAWINP/GETTY IMAGES; LEUNGCHOPAN, SHUTTER B/ADOBESTOCK

Kong Island and to the east, over the hillside that drops away to the beach villages of Shek O and Tai Long Wan (Big Wave Bay).

Many finish by hiking down off the ridge to the latter, one of Hong Kong's most famous surf spots, perhaps also riding a bus or minibus further on to Shek O to enjoy its sleepy vibe at one of a number of relaxed restaurants that make for a fitting end to the day.

THE BUDDHA UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

Lantau Island, in the west of Hong Kong, is a vital green lung for the entire region and home to a network of trails that are among the best in Hong Kong for their challenge and sense of remoteness. Just a few kilometres inland of the airport is Lantau Peak, the territory's second-highest mountain at 934m.

With the Instagram-friendly Sunset Peak next door and in the company of several other high summits, it is an enticing prospect for keen hikers. The most energetic can start their climb from the coast, but many choose to begin from the saddle at Pak Kung Au on the road that traverses the island from north to south. Getting off the bus there leaves around 600m to climb up rocky steps alternating with flatter sections, until a final scramble leads to a summit with all-round views. On a fine day, Macau and the mainland city of Shenzhen are visible, while below, on the Ngong Ping plateau, sits a giant contemplative bronze statue – the 34m-tall Big Buddha. While often busy with tourists, the monastery and the Buddha are very much worth a look, while refreshments at Ngong Ping range from vegetarian Buddhist snacks to Starbucks.

Physically and spiritually nourished, you can then head home via bus or, queues permitting, the spectacular Ngong Ping 360 cable car (HK\$195/US\$25 one way or an additional HK\$40/US\$5 for a glass-bottomed Crystal cabin).

CROUCHING LION, HILLY DRAGON

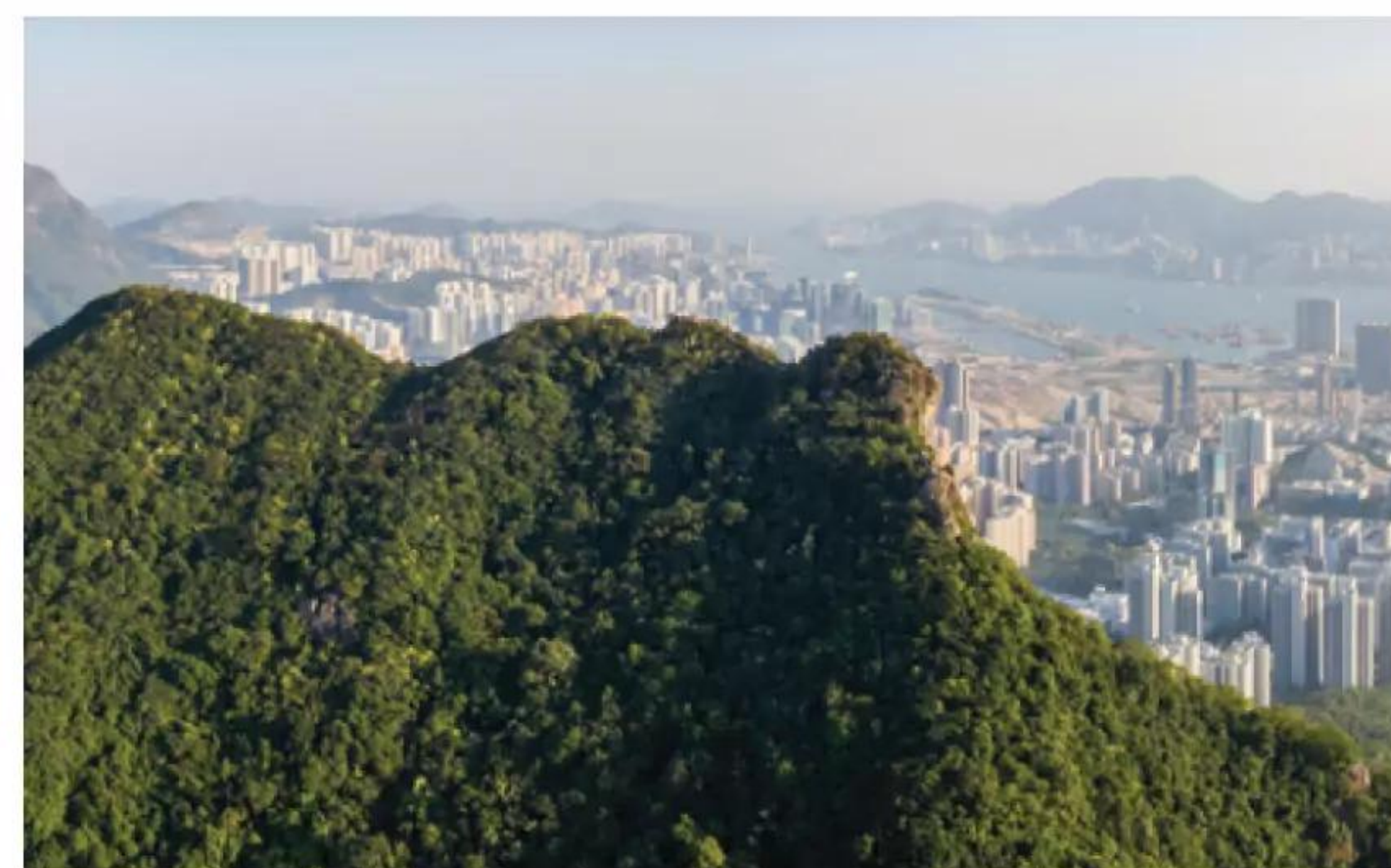
For many visitors, one must-do “hike” is a circuit of The Peak on Hong Kong Island but, while the views are undeniably

great, it is touristy in the extreme. An arguably more interesting and meaningful alternative is Lion Rock (495m) – one of the hills that forms the “Nine Dragons”, the line of peaks that divide the Kowloon Peninsula from Hong Kong's New Territories. Seen from the side, the peak resembles the shaggy head of a mighty lion. Locals like to speak of the city's indomitable “Lion Rock spirit”.

There are numerous ways to approach the hike but the most direct, resulting in a moderately taxing climb, is via a trail starting a little uphill from the entrance to Lion Rock Park. This route takes from 60 minutes to 1.5 hours, with the last steep, rocky portion ending atop a small outcrop. The views from here are stunning, especially at night, with the sprawling residential blocks of Kowloon at your feet, the harbour and the skyline of Hong Kong Island beyond that and the New Territories towns of Sha Tin and Tai Po behind you.

Be aware of macaque monkeys, eager to snatch unguarded items, and keep food out of their sight.

Dragon's Back in the eastern part of Hong Kong Island is widely rated the city's best day hike



LEISURE

RIGHT AND BELOW:
The Dragon Boat Festival on Lamma
Island; Paragliding over Sai Kung



‘A competitive paddling scene culminates in colourful gala events

STAYING CLOSE TO THE ACTION

Understandably, most of Hong Kong's legion of hotels are clustered in the major commercial districts. Many are still viable choices for accessing the countryside of Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula, but there are a handful of options in further-flung locations too.

On the south side of Hong Kong Island, the Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong (*pictured just below*) is ideal for families bound for Ocean Park, a home-grown theme park with rides and an ecological focus, but it's also handy for beaches and hikes including the 50km Hong Kong Trail, which traverses the island. fullertonhotels.com

WM Hotel (*also pictured below*) in Sai Kung, located in the eastern part of the New Territories, is a luxury stay with great views out over the islands off

the coast. Nearby are a number of beachfront vendors offering kayaks, SUP and windsurf gear for hire. wmhotel.hk

For Lantau's peaks and trails, there are a clutch of four- and five-star hotels in the Tung Chung and airport area, as well as simpler hotels such as the Silvermine Beach Resort in Mui Wo, plus guest houses in the quiet south coast villages of Shui Hau (Lantau Lodge) and Tong Fuk (The Cove Hostel).

More basic again are several youth hostels offering accommodation in dorms, rooms and bell tents across the territory, while government-run campsites have toilets and barbecue sites – though some of these get exceptionally busy during weekends and should be booked at camping.gov.hk



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FURTHER ADVENTURES

For cyclists, a growing network of bike paths connects the major towns of the New Territories (Sha Tin, Tai Po, Sheung Shui, Yuen Long etc), with hire facilities in most. Mountain bikers can head for the Tai Mo Shan area in the central New Territories for down-hilling, or Lantau Island's Mui Wo Mountain Bike Practice Ground, Hong Kong's first bike park.

Unsurprisingly, Hong Kong's steep hills offer plenty of opportunities for climbers. Numerous areas beckon, but the spectacular siting of Hong Kong Island's Central Crags above the heart of the city, and the island of Tung Lung Chau, are particularly appealing. See hongkongclimbing.com for more.

Paddlers have plenty of options, too: government water sports centres rent out kayaks and SUP boards but there's also a fiercely competitive paddling scene – in both outriggers and the native dragon boats – which culminates in colourful gala events.

Additionally, there's also a strong interest in sailing, with government facilities offering dinghies for hire and private yacht clubs often seeking crew to make up the numbers on race days.

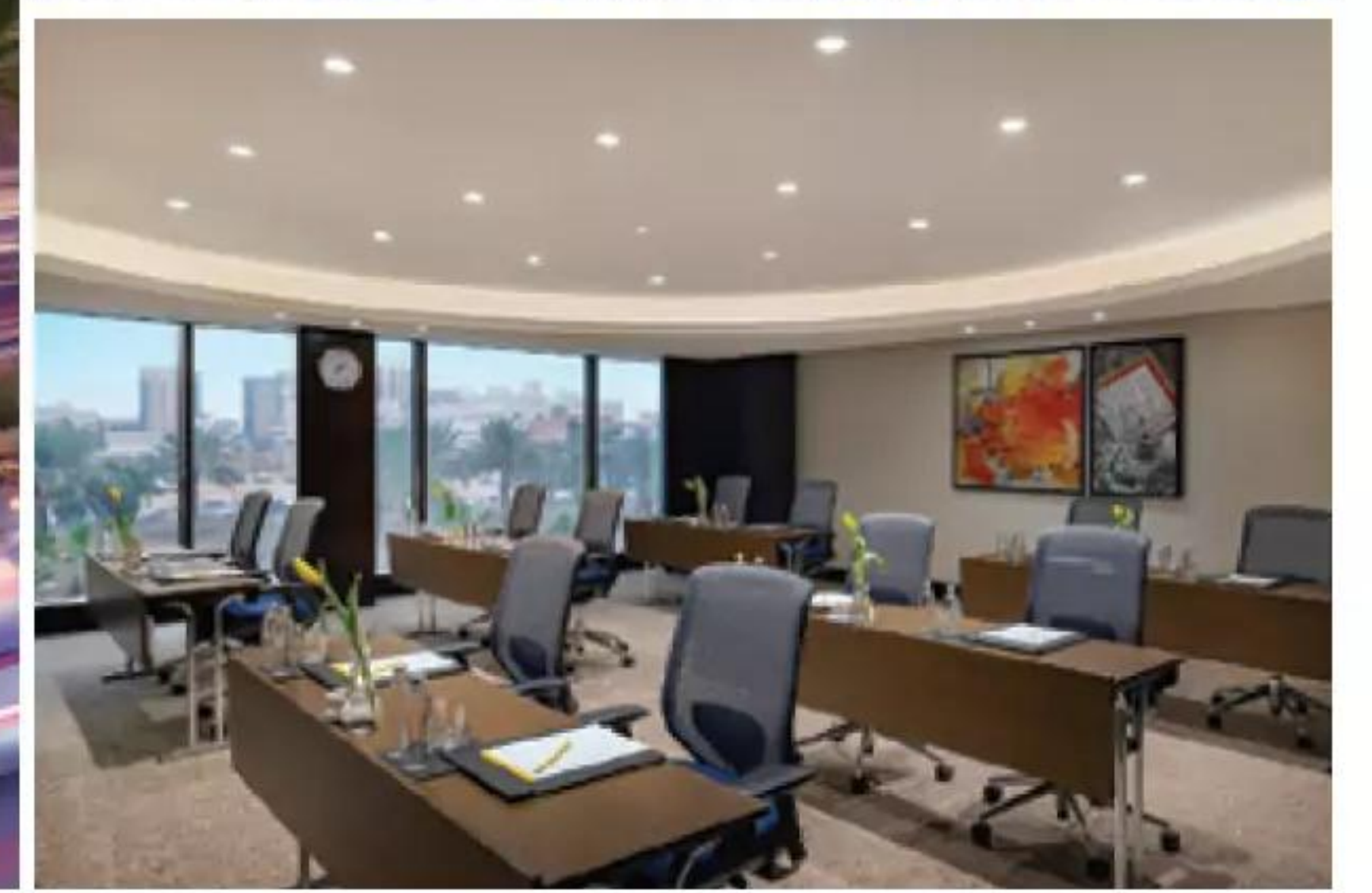
Nature lovers should visit the WWF-protected wetlands at Mai Po in the New Territories, one of few such places along the whole of China's coast. Book well ahead at wwf.org.hk

Unfortunately, a constant tide of trash washes up on the territory's coastline. Hong Kong Cleanup (hkcleanup.org) was the first organisation founded to tackle the problem, back in 2000. Since then, others have joined the effort, including Plastic Free Seas (plasticfreeseas.org). Both publish details of events on their websites. **BT**

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**AIRLINE
REVIEW**

Cathay Pacific
Aria Suite



**HOTEL
REVIEWS**

Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong + 1 Hotel
Mayfair + Grand Millennium Dubai + more



**RESTAURANT
REVIEW**

Revolver
Dubai

Review

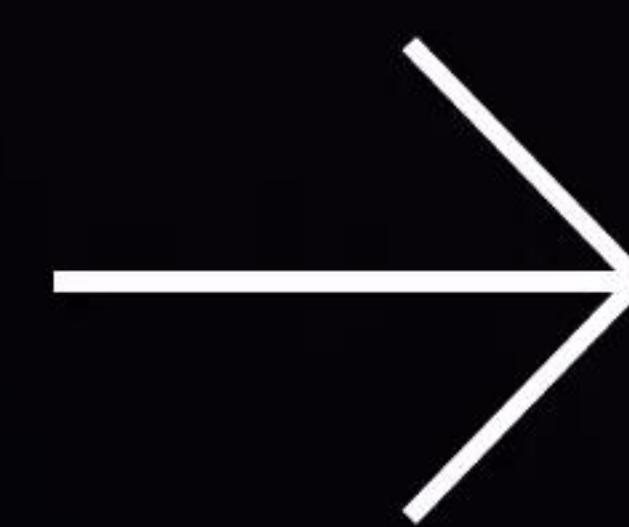
Putting business travel to the test



FLIGHT REVIEW

Cathay Pacific Boeing 777-300ER Aria Suite

We trial Cathay's new business class product,
now flying daily from Dubai to Hong Kong





→

Background

In October 2024, Cathay Pacific debuted its all-new Business Class Aria Suite on the airline's retrofitted 777-300ER on regional and long-haul flights. We tested it out on the airline's CX738 route between Dubai and Hong Kong this spring.

While Cathay doesn't have a dedicated lounge in Dubai, passengers of this flight are provided with access to the Ahlan Business Class Lounge. On the return, you'll have access to The Pier, Business - Cathay's dedicated lounge on the sixth floor of Hong Kong International Airport's Terminal 1, and its largest airport lounge in the world. Within its vast array of sections you'll find plenty of F&B with a variety of cuisines, from a teahouse to a noodle bar, pizza, and more, along with a wide selection of

alcoholic beverages. The lounge offers free wifi access, as well as a quiet zone to relax in, or get in some last-minute emails.

Boarding

The walk from the lounge to the boarding gate took approximately 10 minutes. There was ample seating at the gate, but Business Class passengers can enjoy boarding at their leisure from a separate gate. Boarding was quick and efficient, with no delays. Once onboard, the friendly crew were on hand to ensure we were able to settle in quickly.

The seat

We were assigned seat 15G - an aisle seat in a 1-2-1 configuration in the quiet and separate business class cabin. The 40 business class seats were designed to enable absolute comfort for work and relaxation,

and it shows. With large, lie-flat beds with a leather headrest, smart storage, customisable lighting, easy wireless charging, and a privacy divider - all in high-end finishes with luxurious fabrics and sophisticated neutral hues - the new Aria Suite is a winning experience. The aisle-side armrest, also lined in premium leather, can be adjusted downward to extend the surface of the lie-flat bed.

For IFE, the 24" 4K screen - with a brand-new Smart TV interface and Bluetooth audio streaming - once again elevates the entire experience, as does an amenity kit by Bamford.

The flight

The flight departed Dubai on schedule, with a pre-flight selection of drinks on offer. The temperature was set at a comfortable level for its duration, and the friendly and helpful crew always attentive.

Inflight dining meals can be pre-booked from 10 days and up to 24 hours before your flight, but we chose onboard, from one of four options. Our dinner selection of braised barbeque short rib - served with spinach, carrots, mustard mashed potato, and a leaf salad with vinaigrette - was well-presented and served with a choice of champagne, white or red wine, or port.



All meals on flights to and from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Middle East are prepared according to the Halal method.

Prior to landing, we had a choice of a continental or express breakfast. A signature cocktail - the Cloud Nine - is available, as is Cathay's Betsey Beer: a Mandarin pale ale.

The complimentary wifi was seamless throughout the entire flight, making it easy to connect - and it held well for most of the flight at a relatively good speed.

Arrival

Landing was smooth and timely, and we were out of immigration, met by our ride, and on our way to our hotel in no time. **BT**

VERDICT

The brand-new Aria Suite offers an exceptionally comfortable, thoughtfully-designed premium flight experience accompanied by top-notch service.

BEST FOR

Travellers looking to hit the ground running upon landing, after a flight where you can work, sleep, and relax in one of the best business class experiences in the sky.

GOOD-TO-KNOW

Cathay's business class passengers benefit from a separate check-in area in Dubai International Airport's Terminal 1. The process was quick, efficient, and friendly.

IMAGES SUPPLIED

Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong

A historical property in a prime location that's also an ideal place to stay for Muslim travellers

What's it like?

The first-ever Shangri-La property in Hong Kong, this property first opened its doors in June 1981. Located in the famous shopping and entertainment district of Tsim Sha Sui East, it overlooks Victoria Harbour, offering a stunning view of the Hong Kong Island skyline. A 35-minute drive from Hong Kong International Airport, it's also played host to countless celebrities and VIPs over the years - and a number of famous Hong Kong films have been shot here too.

Its grandeur is evident from the moment you step into the lobby, which, with marble-clad walls, intricate chandeliers, and opulent décor in rich, jewel-toned hues, was designed to mimic the feeling of being inside a Chinese palace. A large and impressive mural by renowned British artist Malcolm Golding, titled "Shangri-La Valley", adds to the effect. One fun effect for business



travellers (or even leisure guests so busy enjoying their holiday they've lost track of time) is that the carpets in the elevators state what day of the week it is, changed at midnight each night. In recent years, the hotel has also been proud to have received a 5 Crescent Rating - the first hotel in Hong Kong to do so - reflecting its commitment to Muslim-friendly hospitality. The designation showcases its commitment to creating comfort for its Muslim clients, through special features in its accommodation, service, and Halal dining experiences.

Rooms

The hotel has 688 guestrooms and suites, all of which are decked out in neutral, stately furnishings for classic luxury. The beds are comfortable and for business travellers, each



VERDICT

Frequently recognised as one of the top hotels in the world, this historical hotel has set benchmarks for Shangri-La on a regional as well as global scale. Staying here offers a slice of history, and easy access to the city's shopping and entertainment hubs, while keeping business travellers' needs in mind.

BEST FOR

Business travellers, leisure travellers who like to shop, and Muslim travellers.

DON'T MISS

A peek at Edward Panda, the hotel's mascot, named after an old colleague, and dinner at Shang Palace, a signature Chinese restaurant serving Cantonese classics with a twist.

PRICE

From US\$170 per night

CONTACT

64 Mody Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong; +852 2721 2111; shangri-la.com

has an excellent desk and chair setup. Muslim guests will be pleased to find a Qibla directional sign, a copy of the Quran, prayer mats, and bidets in the room should they need them - and separate male and female areas with special prayer facilities can be arranged for group usage.

GOOD -TO- KNOW

The hotel has a large amount of event space that can host weddings and large-scale occasions in a banquet hall - as well as multiple meeting rooms

Facilities

There are seven bars and lounges. All dining outlets offer Halal-friendly options, with a wide range of cuisines available, including Cantonese, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, and international cuisine (plus an excellent patisserie). The hotel also has a luxurious spa, with therapeutic, natural, and aromatherapy-supported treatments available. At the 24-hour Health Club, you'll find state-of-the-art fitness equipment, as well as an indoor pool and a heated whirlpool bath. **BT**

IMAGES SUPPLIED




**GOOD
-TO-
KNOW**

The hotel can accommodate large-scale meetings, seminars, conferences, business lunches and dinners, weddings, networking cocktail receptions, and private board meetings.

3 people. There is a sizable wardrobe with a vanity mirror, and a large TV. These room types offer views of Brook or Davies Streets, as well as Brook's Mews. The design of these room types is feminine in essence with warm coloured walls, floor to ceiling windows, and shagreen lamps. All of the rooms and suites here feel quaint, cozy, and luxurious.

Facilities

There are two restaurants and three bars here, including Claridge's Restaurant, The Foyer & Reading Room (where breakfast is served), The Painter's Room, ArtSpace Café, and The Fumoir. The latter has been a fixture since 1929 and has a vintage feel, designed by Bryan O'Sullivan Studio. If you're keen on room service, there's something for everyone, with breakfast options including a Full English, Arab-style, or Japanese option.

To relax, Claridge's Spa - designed by architect André Fu, and meant to mirror traditional Japanese temples and Zen gardens in Kyoto - offers personalised treatments, while you can also get your hair done at the on-site salon. The facilities include an indoor pool, a sauna, and steam room - as well as a gym with NOHRD, PENT and Peloton equipment and personal trainers available for those looking for private training in their room or at the gym. **BT**

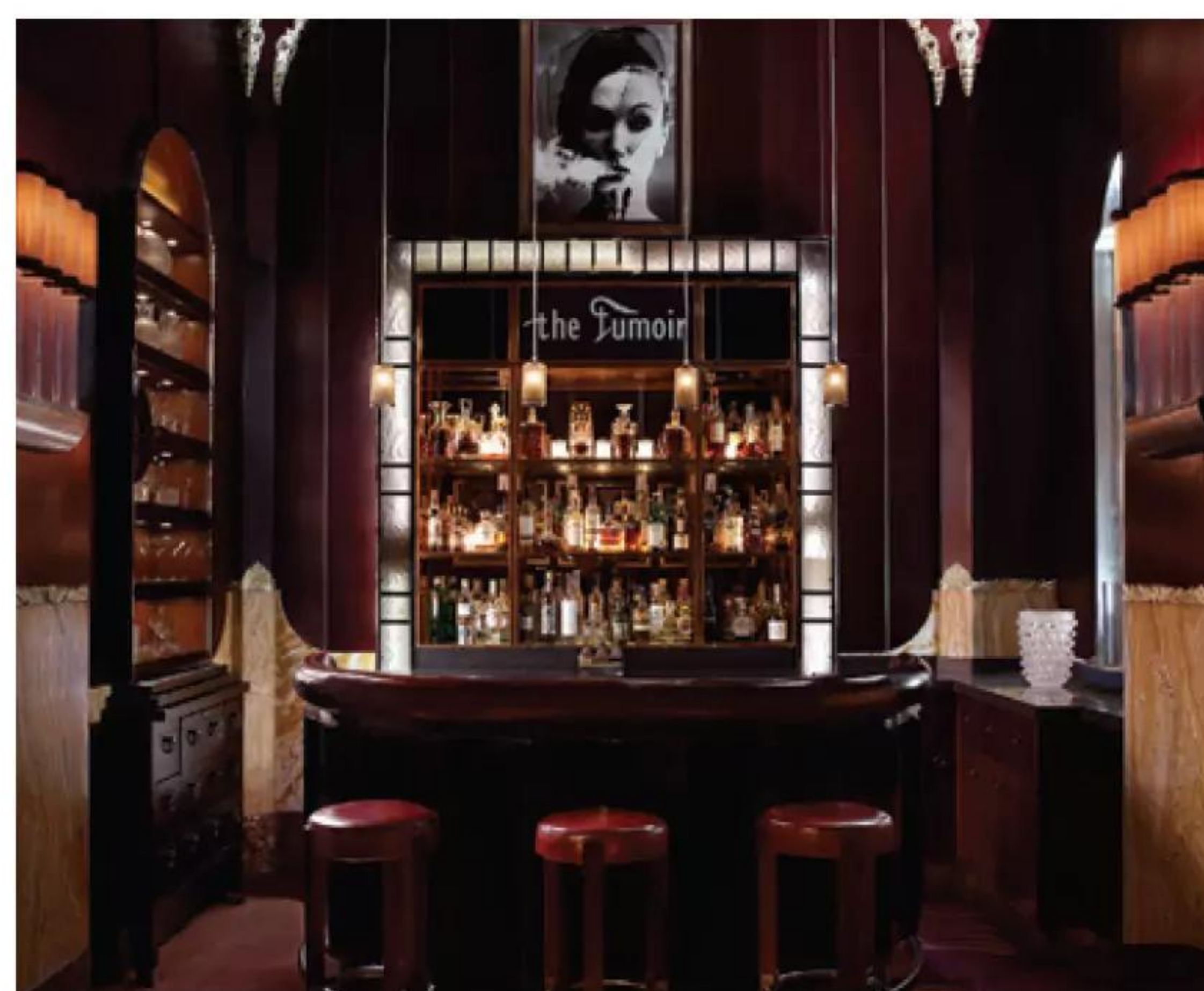
Claridge's London

Following a major refurbishment, this historic Art Deco jewel is still a star for guests seeking quintessential English luxury

What's it like?

The renowned hotel started off in one house at 51 Brook Street, and by 1856 it was composed of 6 buildings. By 1860, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were frequent visitors, along with other royalty and European heads of state. Each decade has seen Claridge's at its best with raging soirees, renovations, royal births, and as a place of exile for monarchs. It has been a declared foreign territory, a home to the biggest names in Hollywood, and has partaken in partnerships with fashion designers and artists. Part of the Maybourne Group, a Qatari-owned British luxury hotel operator, the hotel is like the living room of Mayfair - a place that brings together the community to dine, stay, and relax. Coming this summer is Claridge's Bakery, led by acclaimed chef Richard Hart.

Hollywood actor Spencer Tracy once said "I'd rather go to Claridge's than to Heaven when I die," and from the time that you walk into the lobby and take in the energy of the hotel, you realise you're someplace special. There's a kinesthetic energy to the hotel, but also a welcoming one, with



kind staff always ready to help. Its Art Deco influences bridge the feeling of yesteryear with the modern.

Rooms

There is the original wing of the hotel and a newer wing, with the former offering a different kind of design character that's not found in the latter. The Claridge's Room style infuses old Art Deco influences with modernity. With a King bed (twin beds are possible), it can sleep up to

VERDICT

Classic luxury done right, in a historic intrigue- and culture-rich environment

BEST FOR

Personalised service and attention to detail.

DON'T MISS

The indoor pool.

PRICE

The average nightly rate for the Claridge's Room is £888 per night

CONTACT

Brook Street, Mayfair, London W1K 4HR;
claridges.co.uk



1 Hotel Mayfair, London

This luxurious green haven is the 1 Hotel & Homes brand's first hotel in Europe

What's it like?

This property is all about redefined luxury. Created from two existing buildings, the hotel prides itself on reducing CO2 emissions. It has a strong sustainability and nature ethos, with the idea that foliage is something that's welcomed inside. Over 1,300 individual plants, shrubs, and trees are found throughout the hotel. Plants are watered with the hotel's roof area rainwater, it's pet-friendly, and no plastic is found inside.

As soon as you enter, you're met with greenery and earthy tones: wood walls, Spanish moss hanging from the ceiling, benches made from trees, and stones that house plants. The reception desk is made from a 200-year-old oak tree, and it feels more like being in the countryside than an urban landscape. It brings in as much British nature as possible, with its stone, wood, and foliage sourced from surrounding areas.

Rooms

Room keys are made from recycled

materials, and each room includes filtered water taps with recycled wine-into-water bottles. The Skyline One Bedroom Terrace Suite provides views of Mayfair from the 7th floor. There is construction happening at eye level of the suite, but it's still a nice area to sit and take in London. Inside, it's quiet, and the corner sofa in the living room is the perfect spot to sit and relax. It

feels like a studio apartment, with a dividing wall separating the bedroom and living room.



GOOD -TO- KNOW

Meeting rooms from 32-158 sqm are available, as well as a ballroom, all of which incorporate the nature essence



The bathroom includes Welsh slate rock, offering a mountain nature retreat feel, and bath products are by Bamford. The bathroom feels like a spa - a real catch in a city as busy and sprawled out as London. You won't want to leave from the walk-in shower to the deep soaking tub.

Facilities

There are three dining venues: the Dover Yard bar and lounge, Neighbours café, and Dovetale, led by acclaimed chef Tom Sellers (who has two Michelin stars to his name). There's also a farmstand in the lobby, selling fresh produce daily - falling in line with the hotel's commitment to using as many ethically-sourced, seasonal, organic, locally fresh items as possible in its F&B (including in-room dining).

Wellness is a key feature, with personal trainers available for curated workouts. In your room, the hotel can arrange for HigherDose's Sauna Blanket and PEMF Mat for rejuvenation for a fee. Complimentary yoga and breathwork classes are also offered, and the spa menu includes customised facials and massage treatments led by Carole Bamford. **BT**

VERDICT

A nature-rich escape - with dreamy spa-like bathrooms - that offers an ideal cocoon of tranquility and luxury amidst the noise in a city as busy and sprawled out as London.

BEST FOR

A nature vibe.

DON'T MISS

Dovetale for a fulfilling meal.

PRICE

Online rates for a midweek stay in the Skyline One Bedroom Terrace Suite in May start from £1323 a night; rates for a Queen room start from £529 a night

CONTACT

3 Berkeley Street, London W1J 8DL;
1hotels.com



Grand Millennium Dubai

A do-it-all-and-do-it-well hotel for business and leisure, in the heart of town - now revamped for a new chapter

What's it like?

First built in 2007, Grand Millennium Dubai was last renovated in 2014 - and during all the years since, it's earned a reputation as one of the city's most beloved hotels for entertainment, dining, and nightlife. Its seven F&B offerings include some of Dubai's most long-standing popular venues - such as Lucky Voice; Lock, Stock & Barrel; and the The Belgian Café - and its stellar location makes it as great of a choice for business travellers as it is for leisure travellers.

Despite its range of fulfilling ways to spend leisure time, it's a prime destination for business travel, meetings, and events, with an outstanding Conference Centre including flexible-use meeting halls, a boardroom, networking area, and ballroom. Service is also top-notch: the staff, from the reception to the valet, are exceptionally friendly and efficient.

GOOD-TO-KNOW

Meetings and events booked here are supported by MyMillennium BIZ, with dedicated service and rewards points

Rooms

For a hotel that is so well known for its lifestyle-oriented facilities and dining options, the rooms are a bit of a revelation: they're spacious, full of light, with extremely comfortable beds, satisfyingly strong showers, and a good desk setup. They're also fairly quiet. These rooms and the perfumed hallways leading to them feel like a bolthole from the busy world outside - one that's still just a hop and a skip away from all of the action. A comprehensive upgrade of its rooms, lobby, and residences was unveiled in January 2025, with



a lighter and fresher aesthetic that feels more modern, without losing the warm, gold-toned accents and classic feel that its guests loved before. Its Business Suites are a dream for business travellers: not only are they extremely spacious, with a large living area, the desk setup is thoughtful and practical, with an excellent chair too.

Facilities

Outside of its wide range of dining venues (which includes Toshi - an Asian restaurant with authentic and well-priced cuisine; The Atrium - which offers a large breakfast spread in a Venetian-style room with high ceilings each morning; and the lounge-like Crystal Bar), the hotel also offers in-room dining.

It has a well-equipped gym, an outdoor pool, and a spa with nine treatment rooms plus a spa bath, steam room, sauna, and Moroccan hammam. The hotel also offers guests weekday access to Zero Gravity Beach Club - and it has a private cinema room for up to 12 guests, as well as a kids club. **BT**

VERDICT

This hotel is constantly bustling with life (from its rooms to its facilities) for good reason: it's a prime location with solid facilities and a top team behind it.

BEST FOR

Business travellers seeking a place to work by day and unwind by night.

DON'T MISS

A relaxed meal at the in-house Belgian Café's rooftop garden area.

PRICE

Online rates for a midweek stay in a Business Suite in May start from Dhs1,157 a night; rates for a Superior room start from Dhs435 a night

CONTACT

Barsha Heights, Dubai
+971 4 429 9999;
millenniumhotels.com/en/dubai/
grand-millennium-dubai

Revolver Dubai



A Singaporean import with an open-fire grill and blast of flavour with every bite

What's it like?

This Michelin-select name has lit up the competitive Singapore restaurant scene since 2021; now, foodies in Dubai can get a taste. Revolver is all about fire and flair, and its menu pays homage to traditional South Asian culinary heritage with a bold, experimental twist. At the helm is Chef Jitin Joshi, a culinary visionary with 27 years of experience and a Michelin-starred history. Diners will step from the bright futuristic interiors of The Opus into a space that is dark and moody: a true Yin and Yang experience. A glowing, chandelier-like

bullet spiral hangs above the dining area, while on the opposite end, diners can watch while chefs are engaged in fiery and smokey theatrics.

Food and drink

At first, the menu may look familiar. But this is Revolver, where the expected is always reimagined. And you can expect nothing less at the Dubai restaurant. Take for example, the Goan Prawn Balchao which arrives at the table wrapped in a seaweed hand roll. One bite and the vinegar-laced masala instantly brings back memories of India. The

Burrata Street Style is one of the most unique burrata preparations we've seen in Dubai: Rather than the usual cherry tomatoes, pesto, and balsamic vinegar, here, the creamy cheesy dough of goodness comes swimming in a peanut sauce that you can lap up with warm churros. And yes, you are encouraged to eat it with your hands. Another standout is the Snapper on Fire, which you can spy being prepared on the charcoal grill. It arrives to the table with dramatic flair in a freshly charred banana leaf. Expect a delicious combination of spicy acidic tamarind as it mingles with the fresh,



buttery fish. It was a standout dish that hit every note. For coffee fans, skip the caffeine in a cup post your meal, and opt for the Filter Coffee Milk Cake instead. You won't regret it. Want to try it all? Beyond the a la carte menu, Revolver presents an 'experience' menu centered around all the best dishes. Score!

Service

You know the service was beyond expectation when the one of the first things you recall is the staff. Our lovely waitress, Pritisha, knew her way around the menu, nudging us towards the star dishes - and she was right about every single one of them. The rest of the team mirrored her genuine energy, offering the kind of hospitality that feels effortless but leaves a lasting impression. **BT**

VERDICT

Revolver is a fiery, flavour-packed experience that doesn't just deliver - it dares you to come back for more.

HOURS

Open daily from 6pm to 1am, and weekdays for lunch from 12pm to 3pm.

CONTACT

Level 1, The Opus
by Omniyat,
Business Bay, Dubai ;
+971 4 257 9334;
revolverdubai.ae

DRESS CODE

Smart casual attire
is encouraged.

GOOD -TO- KNOW

Revolver's chef is the man behind the now two-Michelin-starred Gymkhana in London, and has cooked for royalty and celebrities alike.



Wagyu
Scotch Egg
with caviar



Exceeding expectations

EXEED BY AL GHURAIR celebrated the unveiling of its electric vehicle and hybrid models in the UAE last month, with an exclusive launch event held at Skydive Dubai. The premium automotive brand aims to reshape the region's sustainable mobility landscape by combining innovative technologies and performance to offer superior driving experiences. Within the reveal was the launch of its fully-electric models: the EXLANTIX ET SUV and the ELANTIX ES – EXEED's first sedan. Equipped with the Super Hybrid Range Extended Electric Vehicle (REEV) technology, both models deliver a driving range of over 1,000km. At the heart of this line-up is their Qualcomm-powered technology. Coveted features include Arabic voice command, an intelligent cockpit, 5-star C-NCAP and C-NCAP safety ratings, and cutting-edge driver assistance. **BT**

IMAGE: EXEED



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